

Family History Technology Workshop

The proposal I submitted is for the Family History Technology Workshop to be co-located with the Innovator Summit. The Family History Technology Workshop has been operating for 15 years at Brigham Young University. For many years, this workshop was the only place to hear about the latest technology developments in the area of genealogy research. Please see fhtw.byu.edu for an example of what a program looks like each year and for an archive of all previous workshops.

Last year, we held the workshop the day before the summit, and this was highly successful. We had a series of speakers from academia, from FamilySearch, from developers, and from the startup community. We had especially big turnout for a demo session where we invited numerous submissions from the RootsTech Developer's Challenge to show off their product. We had 75+ attendees, and all expressed a strong desire to hold this workshop jointly with the Innovator Summit again.

We believe it would be very helpful to the community to consolidate our effort into a single day at the Innovator Summit, rather than holding it a day in advance. This would enable everyone to focus on a one-day event rather than having to attend two different events to hear about the latest technology developments. Currently, the Summit holds a Business track and a Developer's Track. We envision a third Academic track.

Our request is unusual because rather than a single 30 to 90 minute slot, we would like to host three sessions. We will be able to fill two 60 minute sessions of presentations, each with 3 to 4 speakers and 15 to 20 minute talks. We will also be able to fill one 90-minute session of lightning talks and demos. We are confident we can host these sessions because of our 15-year experience running the conference.

We do not yet have a list of speakers for the workshop. Due to the nature of late-breaking research results, we typically organize the speakers 3 months in advance of the program. We anticipate that this year we could organize speakers during October and November to provide enough lead time for the RootsTech Innovator's Summit.

Please let me know if you need additional details to work this out. We would very much like to co-locate this event in this and future years.

Thank you,

Daniel Zappala
Associate Professor, BYU
zappala@cs.byu.edu