

Southwest Fox 2018

Call for Speakers

You are invited to submit session proposals for Southwest Fox 2018. The Southwest Fox conference has been organized by Geek Gatherings, a partnership of long-time Visual FoxPro MVPs Rick Schummer, Doug Hennig and Tamar E. Granor, since 2007.

Southwest Fox is primarily a Visual FoxPro conference. However, we welcome sessions on other technologies that can enhance VFP development and that improve development generally, as well as best practices in VFP development. We're also interested in a few sessions that offer Visual FoxPro developers a path forward.

Southwest Fox 2018 will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton and SanTan Elegante Conference & Reception Center in Gilbert, Arizona on October 18-21. Pre-conference sessions will be held during the day on Thursday, October 18. The main conference will begin with a keynote address that night. Breakout sessions will take place all day Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday morning. The conference will close with a general session midday Sunday. We also may offer some advanced post-conference sessions on Sunday afternoon.

In addition to any career benefits you may get from speaking, presenting at a conference is a way of contributing to your developer community. Every developer owes a debt to those who came before them, writing and speaking about software development. Preparing and delivering conference sessions is a way of paying that debt forward, as well as strengthening your community.

Session proposals are due no later than **March 12, 2018**. If you are interested in speaking at Southwest Fox 2018, please read this entire document before submitting proposals. Send any questions to speakers@geekgatherings.com.

Tracks

We are particularly interested in topics that fit into one or more of the following tracks:

- **Solidifying VFP Development**—This track will appeal to all VFP developers. Sessions should cover either a) VFP fundamentals, aimed at those newer to VFP, whether moving up from FP2.x or coming to VFP from other languages; b) VFP best practices, aimed at helping all VFP developers improve; or c) in-depth looks at aspects of VFP that some developers may not have mastered yet.
- **Taking Advantage of VFPX**—The sessions in this track should showcase the projects in VFPX, providing attendees with enough information to put those projects to work for them. These sessions should be deep dives into specific VFPX projects. We will consider offering a single "What's new in VFPX?" session.

- **Extending VFP**—The sessions in this track will look at ways to extend VFP's reach, by using it together with other products or by taking advantage of native extension capabilities, including working with SQL back-ends.
- **Moving Visual FoxPro Applications Forward**—This track will cover topics related to modernizing VFP applications as well as alternatives for new platforms and future application development.
- **Web and Mobile**: The sessions in this track are aimed at developers who want to learn more about creating web and connected mobile applications.
- **Technology and Business for the Database Developer**—This track will look at tools, technologies and techniques to make life as a developer easier and more productive.

Over the last few years, Southwest Fox attendees have specifically asked for more advanced sessions. There's a list of topics that prior attendees specifically asked for on our blog at <http://swfox.net/blog/2018/02/what-do-you-want-to-learn-2018-edition/>.

Additional Information

Feel free to suggest other topics if they have a connection to VFP and you believe attendees will find them valuable.

We are also looking for half-day and full-day **pre-conference sessions**. These should be designed to bring attendees up to speed on a subject to prepare them to get the most out of the main conference, or to offer an introductory, yet in-depth look at a topic VFP developers may find interesting.

Finally, we are looking for half-day **post-conference sessions**. These should be advanced deep dives into a topic, ideally laced with real-world experience.

Speaker's Responsibilities

Most speakers will present two different sessions; most sessions (except pre-conference and post-conference sessions) will be given twice. Under special circumstances, we may consider choosing a speaker to give only a single session twice. In other words, most speakers will be presenting four times, while a few may present only twice. Regular conference sessions will be 75 minutes, while pre-conference and post-conference sessions will be three hours.

Speakers must provide a brief bio and a digital photo for publicity purposes. The bio should be included with session proposals (see "[Submitting Proposals](#)" below). The photo can be submitted with session proposals, but must be submitted by **April 11, 2018**.

Speakers must provide session notes (a "white paper") for each session. They may also provide slides. Where appropriate, code examples should be provided as well. **It is not acceptable to provide slides and no white paper for any session.** All materials are due no later than **Monday, October 1, 2018**.

Speakers are expected to be available to attendees throughout the conference. While this doesn't mean every minute of each day, for attendees to get full value for the conference, they must have the opportunity to talk to speakers outside of sessions. Speakers are expected to attend conference lunches and be visible during at least some breaks.

Speakers are expected to rehearse their sessions prior to arriving in Gilbert, so that both the first and second presentations run smoothly.

Speakers are expected to abide by the [Code of Conduct](#) for the conference.

Speaker's Rights

For speakers presenting two different topics, we will provide round-trip economy airfare to Phoenix from your home city, a room at the conference hotel for three nights (four nights for those presenting pre-conference or post-conference sessions) and admission to the main conference and any pre-cons or post-cons you wish to attend.

For those speakers presenting only a single session twice, we will pay half of your round-trip economy airfare to Phoenix from your home city, and half the cost of a room at the conference hotel for three nights, and will provide registration to the conference at half of the lowest price we offer to the public.

Submitting Proposals

To be considered, submit your proposals at <https://geekgatherings.com/Submission> no later than 8 AM EDT on **Monday, March 12, 2018**. Each session proposal must include:

- 1) The session title
- 2) An abstract (100-200 words) describing the session.
- 3) A list of 4 or 5 bullet points finishing the sentence "Attendees will learn ..."
- 4) The track(s) into which the session fits.
- 5) The level(s) for the session: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced. This is the level for VFP developers, even if the session is about working with another technology. Think of the level (or levels) as fitting into the sentence "This session is appropriate for people who are at the <level> level with VFP."
- 6) Any prerequisites for the session.
- 7) Anything else you think we should know about this session.

Be sure to click Save in order to submit your proposal. You can make modifications to your personal information and proposals until 8 AM on March 12; we will not retrieve the stored data until then.

The Selection Process

There is no shortage of able speakers in the developer community. That means that filling the speaker slots for this conference won't be hard, but choosing among all the qualified speakers will be. Among those who have spoken previously, preference will be given to those who have met their past obligations by submitting a full set of materials on time.

We consider the cultivation of new talent an important goal. Therefore, we encourage those who have not spoken at VFP conferences before to submit proposals. If you are unsure whether your topics are appropriate, feel free to contact us before the deadline to discuss them. Be aware, of course, that such discussions do not constitute a commitment on our part to choose you, but are meant to help you submit stronger proposals.

Beyond that, the most important consideration will be the topics you propose and how they fit into the conference as a whole. You increase your chance of being selected by submitting at least three good topics. Entirely new topics will get priority, but we recognize that some topics can never grow stale and that it can be difficult to find new things to present for Visual FoxPro at this point in its life cycle. Thus, we will consider some topics that you have previously presented at Southwest Fox, as long as they have not been presented since 2014, and they are updated appropriately; make sure the abstract for such a session reflects the updates. As always, we expect to receive more good proposals than available space, so if you are not chosen, please don't take it personally.

Initial speaker selection will be completed by Wednesday, April 4, 2018. Selected speakers will be notified by email and asked to confirm their willingness to speak by Wednesday, April 11, 2018. Once all speaker slots have been filled, those not selected will be notified.

If early registration warrants, we will select additional speakers. If we decide to add speakers, the additional speakers will be invited by Tuesday, July 3, 2018 and will need to confirm by Tuesday, July 10, 2018.

Session Materials and Deadlines

While attendees learn a lot at conferences, the materials they take home provide the lasting impact of a conference. As noted above, **session notes are not optional** as they offer the greatest value to attendees. However, we want to emphasize that session notes are not meant to be books or *the* definitive work on a topic. The notes should cover the material in the session, and provide pointers to additional information. Helping people avoid common problems is helpful, too. For many topics, a paper of 15 to 20 pages is a reasonable goal.

In addition, we are providing all submission deadlines now so that you can check them against your personal calendar before submitting proposals. If you cannot meet the deadlines, please do not submit proposals.

We are very serious about speaker obligations. Those who do not fulfill their obligations will not be invited to speak at next year's conference.

Summary of Important Dates

March 12, 2018: Session proposals due.

April 4, 2018: Speaker selection completed and selected speakers notified.

April 11, 2018: Acceptance of speaker invitation due. Any revisions to bios, abstracts and speaker photo due.

July 3, 2018: Any additional speakers will be notified.

July 10, 2018: Acceptance of additional speaker invitations due.

October 1, 2018: All session materials due.

October 18-21, 2018: Southwest Fox 2018