

## Southwest Fox 2024

### Call for Speakers

You are invited to submit session proposals for Southwest Fox 2024. 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. The same team has operated Virtual Fox Fest since 2020.

**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 sessions that offer Visual FoxPro developers a path forward.

Southwest Fox 2024 will be a hybrid conference held September 26-29. The in-person event will be held at the Hampton Inn Phoenix-Scottsdale. The virtual event will use the HopIn platform. The conference will begin on Thursday afternoon, September 26 with an opening session. Breakout sessions will take place Thursday afternoon, all day Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday morning. The conference will close with a general session early 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 18, 2024**. If you are interested in speaking at Southwest Fox 2024, please read this entire document before submitting proposals. Send any questions to [speakers@geekgatherings.com](mailto:speakers@geekgatherings.com).

### Tracks

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

- **Solidifying VFP Development**—These 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**—These sessions 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**—These sessions should 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**—These sessions should cover topics related to modernizing VFP applications as well as alternatives for new platforms and future application development. We are particularly interested in sessions about recent additions to the list of new platforms, such as X# and VFP Advanced.
- **Web and Mobile:** These sessions are aimed at developers who want to learn more about creating web and connected mobile applications.
- **Technology and Business for the Database Developer**—These sessions should 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 <https://swfox.net/blog/2024/02/what-do-you-want-to-learn-2024-edition/>.

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

## Speaker's Responsibilities

Most speakers will present one session. Some speakers may offer to present two sessions or one two-part session. All sessions will be given one time. Conference sessions will be 75 minutes and will be immediately followed by a 15-minute Q&A session.

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 17, 2024**. If you have not spoken at a Geek Gatherings conference previously, please include your speaking experience in your bio.

We strongly encourage speakers to provide session notes (a "white paper"), but they are not required. Speakers may also provide slides. Where appropriate, code examples should be provided as well. All materials are due no later than **Monday, September 9, 2024**.

In-person speakers must book their own travel, including hotel rooms. We will provide the booking code for the Southwest Fox discounted room rate. See "Travel Expenses" below for more information.

In-person 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.

Virtual speakers are expected to be present in some of the virtual open discussion sessions during the conference. This doesn't mean attending a discussion session during

every break, but virtual attendees (and in-person attendees who choose to join the virtual discussion sessions) should have the opportunity to interact with speakers informally.

Speakers are expected to rehearse their sessions prior to the conference, so that presentations run smoothly. In addition, since all sessions will use HopIn to present to virtual attendees, speakers are expected to attend an online practice session with HopIn before the conference. In-person speakers are also expected to attend a technical rehearsal at the conference facility.

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

## Speaker's Rights

All speakers will receive free admission to the conference, whether in-person or virtual. In-person speakers will receive lunch on Friday and Saturday.

We will provide all in-person speakers with round-trip transportation from the Phoenix airport to the conference hotel.

Speakers own the copyright to their materials but grant us permission to include them in the downloads available to attendees. When presenting entirely new sessions, we prefer that speakers do not share their papers publicly until after the conference.

All sessions will be recorded, and the recordings will be posted on the Southwest Fox website and the Geek Gatherings YouTube site (or any successor site that Geek Gatherings may choose). Speakers grant Geek Gatherings permission to distribute the recording.

## Travel Expenses

Speakers are responsible for their own travel expenses, including airfare and hotel nights. However, we hope to be able to reimburse some or all of those expenses. Whether that's possible will depend on registration for the conference.

Speakers who submit papers will receive priority in reimbursement. Available funds will first be applied to the travel expenses (hotel rooms and airfare or car expenses) of those submitting papers, then to travel expenses for those without papers.

## Submitting Proposals

To be considered, submit your proposals at <https://geekgatherings.com/Submission> no later than 8 AM EDT on **Monday, March 18, 2024**. 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) Whether you plan to present in-person or virtually. (Include this information in the "Comments for Organizers" section on the Geek Gatherings submission site.)
- 8) Anything else you think we should know about this session.

Be sure to click Save to submit your proposal. You can make modifications to your personal information and proposals until 8 AM on March 18; we will not retrieve the stored data until then.

Be aware that, by default, the Sessions page of the Submission site is sorted in reverse alphabetical order of Event Name. To have your current submissions at the top of the list, click twice on the Last Modified column header. Once you set this order, the site will remember it.

## The Selection Process

In making speaker selections for this conference, 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 previously spoken at VFP conferences 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 two good topics. Entirely new topics will get priority, but we recognize that some topics 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 (at Southwest Fox or Virtual Fox Fest) since 2019, 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 10, 2024. Selected speakers will be notified by email and asked to confirm their willingness to speak by Wednesday, April 17, 2024. Once all speaker slots have been filled, those not selected will be notified.

## **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 optional, but as they offer the greatest value to attendees, we strongly encourage you to provide a paper. 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 future conferences.

## **Summary of Important Dates**

March 18, 2024: Session proposals due.

April 10, 2024: Speaker selection completed and selected speakers notified.

April 17, 2024: Acceptance of speaker invitation due. Any revisions to bios, abstracts and speaker photo due.

September 9, 2024: All session materials due.

September 26-29: Southwest Fox 2024