LavaC☉n

Preliminary Program

October 5–8, 2025
Atlanta, Georgia

LavaCon

LavaCon 2025
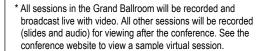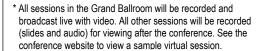5–8 OCT. ATLANTA, GA

From Content Strategy to Content Operations: Reducing Costs and Generating Revenue Through Better Content

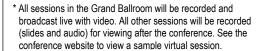| Pre-conference Workshops: Sunday, 5 October 2025				
7:00–	Registration in Grand Ballroom Foyer Coffee (breakfast on your own)			
	Optional Pre-conference Workshops			
8:00–Noon	**Introduction to Content Strategy** *Noz Urbina* *Principal* *Urbina Consulting*	**Content First Design** *Sarah Johnson* *Founder* *Content First Design*		**JUMPin2it with Modern Marketing Magic: Branding, Tech & AI for Next-Level Success** *Anita Booth, Vice President, Women in Payments, and Gabrielle Hailmann Founder and CEO 360 Integral Marketing*	**Free Workshop: Hands-On with AI: How to Work Smarter, Not Harder with ChatGPT** *Kat Reierson* *Manager, Product Documentation* *Docusign*
Noon–1:00	Lunch on your own			
1:00–5:00	**AI-Powered, Human-Approved: Content Strategy That Wins** *Amanda Patterson* *Sr. Consultant* *Comtech Services*	**Content First Design (continued)** *Sarah Johnson* *Founder* *Content First Design*		**Escalation Exercise: A Content Buy-In Workshop** *Gina Cairney* *Lead Content Designer and Thatcher Snyder Senior Content Designer Cvent*	**Free Workshop: They Already Sent a Poet, and It's You** *Carol Hattrup* *Sr Technical Writer*
5:30–6:30	**Welcome Reception**			

Conference Day 1: Monday, 6 October 2025

Time					
7:30–	**Registration, Breakfast**				
8:30–9:00	**Welcome!**				
9:00–9:20	**From Almost Laid Off to Indispensable: Future Proofing Your Content Career** *Caroline Roth, Vice President of Content Experience, Salesforce*				
9:20–9:40	**Leading, Mothering, and Letting Go of Perfect** *LJ Marinello, Senior Director, Cloud Strategy & Customer Success, Microsoft*				
9:40–10:00	**I Drew the Five of Cups! A (tongue-in-cheek) Tarot Reading on the Future of the Content Creation in the Age of AI** *Lucie Hyde, Senior Director of User Experience & Design, PayPal*				
Track	*Content Marketing and Content Strategy*	*Customer Experience and Governance*	*Content Development * and Content Ops*	*Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning*	*Tools and Technology*
10:15–11:00	**Next on Netflix: Bridging Marketing and UX with a High-Impact Content Framework** *Britt Stewart, Senior Content Designer, Netflix*	**Healing a Broken Customer Experience** *Fabrice Lacroix CEO Fluid Topics*	**Why Content Strategy Is Important and How You Can Make a Case for It** *Mary Southworth and Lee Bryars Fidelity Investments*	**Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Content Strategy and Generation** *Pranami Jhawar Senior Software Engineer Microsoft*	**How to Really Choose the Right Content Management System for All** *Jyothi Krishnamurthi and Rebecca Rhee LinkedIn*
11:15–12:00	**Mastering the PESO Model: Unifying Content Strategy and AI for Maximum Marketing Impact** *John Yembrick Director of Content Strategy Lockheed Martin*	**Content in Color: How Strategists and Architects use Design to Bring Ideas to Life** *Amber Swope, DITA Strategies and Roland Muts, Veer Agency*	**The Leadership Multiplier: Systems to Scale Yourself and Your Team** *Nicole LeBlanc Manager, Content Design Zillow*	**The Role of Metadata in Managing Content in Unified Portals & AI-readiness** *Andrew Douglas Business Development Manager, Bluestream*	**What to Expect When You're Expecting (a CCMS)** *Dawn Stevens President Comtech Services*
12:00–1:15	**Lunch** and **Vendor Demos** in the Exhibit Hall**,** Comfort Dogs in the Grand Ballroom Foyer				
1:15–2:00	**The AI-First Marketing Team Blueprint** *Leslie Carruthers President TheSearchGuru.com*	**Expanding Self-Service for a Better Customer Experience** *Lief Erickson, Intuitive Stack and Dave Marotz, Surescripts*	**Empowering Teams for Success with Building Agentic Experiences** *Caryn Horowitz and Jyothi Krishnamurthi LinkedIn*	**Honey, I Shrunk our Content Performance with GenAI** *Michael Mannhardt President, Congree Language Technologies*	**Automating Large Scale Rewriting Using Gen AI** *Charles Dowdell Manager Technical Communications Komatsu NA*
2:15–3:00	**Critical Persuasion: A D&D-Themed Guide to Rolling for Influence Without Authority** *Erica McPeek Transformations Care Network*	TBA	**Panel Discussion: The Role of Structured Content and DITA in Agentic AI & RAG** *Dawn Stevens, President Comtech Services (Moderator)*	**Top Five Ways to Harness the Power of AI Co-Pilots** *Scott Abel Content Strategy Evangelist Heretto*	**From Vision to Implementation: Adoption Techniques for Enterprise Content Teams** *Eeshita Grover Sr Director, Content Design Cisco*
3:00–4:00	**Snack Break** in the Exhibit Hall				
4:00–4:20	**The Impossible Dream: Unified Authoring for Customer Content** *Sarah O'Keefe, CEO, Scriptorium*				
4:20–4:40	**The Experimentation Mindset: How Testing Transforms Content Strategy** *Melinda Belcher, Head of Experience Design, JPMorgan Chase*				
4:40–5:00	**TBA** *Patrick Bosek, CEO, Heretto*				
5:00–6:30	**Network Reception** followed by **Live Storytelling Event**				

LavaCon

Conference Day 2: Tuesday, 7 October 2025

Time					
7:30	**Breakfast**				
8:30–8:50	**Unlock Funding: How to Persuade Leaders to Invest in your Vision** *Wendy Richardson, Former Mastercard Executive and President of Managing Up*				
8:50–9:10	**Why Technical Writers Should Care About Governance, Risk, and Compliance (Even if It Sounds Boring)** *Megan Gilhooly, Sr. Director GRC Content, OneTrust*				
9:10–9:30	**Broken Trust, Broken Docs: Fixing the Hidden Gaps Undermining Your Technical Content** *Rob Hanna, CEO and Co-founder, Precision Content*				
9:45–10:30	**What Marketing and Sales Can Teach the Rest of Us About Customer Experience** *Sara Feldman, Dir of Member Engagement, CFSE*	**Creating (Imperfect) Content for Perfectionists** *Jael Schultz* *Content Architect* *A Global Financial Institution*	**Building the Case for Content Operations in Complex Organizations** *Trey Smith, Sr. Program Supervisor, TechPubs Lead Honeywell*	**Am I The AI Luddite? Questioning the Use of AI in Content Creation** *Alan Porter* *Founder / CCO* *The Content Pool*	**Programmatic Loves Structure: Why You Need a DITA-first Headless Strategy** *Jim Edmunds and Nathan Eggen, Ingeniux*
10:45–11:30	**How to Build an AI-supported Buyer's Journey** *Cara McDonald* *CEO and Founder* *Content Matterz*	**Building Trust: Measuring Human and Machine Performance on Technical Content** *Rob Hanna, CEO, Precision Content*	**Making a Business Case for Content Tools: How to Advocate for the Right Tools and Secure Leadership Buy-In** *Bridget O'Donnell* *Alibaba Group*	**The Slow Adoption of Gen AI Across the Enterprise—And What You Can Do About It** *Colleen Jones* *President* *Content Science*	**Smart Content for Smart Learning: Transforming DITA Into LMS Courses** *Alan Pringle* *COO* *Scriptorium*
11:30–1:00	**Lunch** and **Vendor Demos** in the Exhibit Hall, **Comfort Llamas** in the Grand Ballroom Foyer				
1:15–2:00	**25 Tools in 25 Weeks: Solving Marketing Challenges with Human-Tested AI Solutions** *Julie Hochheiser Ilkovich* *Managing Partner* *Masthead*	**Building a Content Strategy with a Small Team (or No Team at All)** *Nick Kakanis* *Content Designer III* *Pilot Company*	**Rethinking Content Metrics with AI: Proving Business Value and Driving Strategic Decisions** *Sofiya Minnath* *Senior Technical Writing Manager, fabric inc.*	**AI Content Strategy: Unifying Enterprise Teams, Redefining Authority** *Jeff Coyle* *SVP, Strategy* *Siteimprove & MarketMuse*	**How We Used DITA to Automate Testing, Improve Gen AI Accuracies, and Lower Costs** *Alexander Lum and Richard Kung, Ciena*
2:15–3:00	**Owning Your Brand Narrative in an AI-Driven World** *Katie Tweedy* *Director Content Marketing* *Collective Measures*	**Zero to Hero: Turning the Knowledge Management Kaleidoscope** *Mirhonda Studevant, C-Sync and* *Brock Brown, LinkedIn*	**Customer Connection: Turning Feedback into Quantifiable Results** *Pam Noreault* *Principal Information Architect, Ellucian, Inc.*	**A Tale of Ten Productivity Prompts** *Gavin Austin* *Principal Technical Writer* *Salesforce*	**Docs-as-Code, DITA, or Unstructured Authoring?** *Hannah Kirk* *The Pink-Haired Content Strategist*
3:00–3:45	**Snacks, Vendor Demos** in Exhibit Hall				
3:45–4:30	**The Four Pillars of Creating Findable and Usable Content** *Viqui Dill* *Documentation Specialist* *Navy Federal Credit Union*	**Let's All Get Along We Need Bridges Not Silos** *Leslie Farinella* *President* *Content Rules*	**Use the Force of Your Words: The Jedi Path to Better Content** *Joe Gollner,* *Gnostyx Research Inc.* *and Carol Hattrup*	**Speeding Through Compliance: How AI Helps Content Keep Pace with Change!** *Harpreet Shergill and Shai Chaudhary, OneTrust*	**D(ocs) & D(evelopment): Finding the Perfect Party for Your Content Campaign** *Kim Nylander and Hedley Simons* *Grafana Labss*
4:45–5:05	**The Curators of Truth: Elevating Knowledge in the Age of AI** *Jason Kaufman, President & CEO, Zaon Labs*				
5:05–5:25	**TBA**				
5:25–5:45	**No One Left Behind: The Business Case for Inclusivity and Inclusive Content** *Dipo Ajose-Coker, Senior Marketing Manager, RWS*				
6:30–	**Parade** to dinner venues then **Annual Karaoke Night** *sponsored by* ***RWS***				

LavaCon

Conference Day 3: Wednesday, 8 October 2025

Time					
8:00–	**Breakfast**				
8:30–9:15	**Get People to Do What You Want: The Magic of Influencing Without Authority** *Nicole Edens and Heather Barbre Blades* *Jack Henry and Associates*	**Legal, Compliance, and Risk, Oh My! How to Shift Your Relationship from "Oh No!" to "Oh Yeah!"** *Shannon Leahy, Sr Mgr Experience Design* *Capital One*	**Quantifying Quality: Navigating the Challenges of Measuring Content Impact** *Vishal Gupta* *Content Designer* *Cisco*	**RAGs to Riches: How Our Content Affects Retrieval Augmented Generation** *Manny Silva* *Head of Documentation* *Skyflow*	**Are You for Real? Fighting Fake Content and Maintaining Trust with C2PA** *Demian Hess* *Sr Solutions Architect* *Amazon Web Services*
9:30–10:15	**Bridging Continents: Managing Product Content Teams Across Cultures and Borders** *Manoj Bokil* *Sr. Manager, Technical Content Strategy* *Teradata India*	**AI-Assisted Authoring: Hype vs. Reality Ensuring Consistency and Compliance** *Bonnie Swanson* *Technical Communications Manager* *Proscia*	**Future-Proofing Global Content: Governance, Scale, and SaaS Success at Broadcom** *Bernard Aschwanden* *Principal AEM Guides Technologist*	**You Can Tune a Piano— You Can Also Tune a Prompt** *Susan Kelley* *Senior Technical Content Strategist* *Medidata*	**Do You Need a CCMS to Deliver Enterprise Content With Quality and Velocity?** *Nick Green and Edward Porter* *SAS Institute*
10:30–11:15	*Reserved to Repeat Standing Room Only Sessions*	*Reserved to Repeat Standing Room Only Sessions*	**Content Effectiveness: Measuring What Matters** *Hilary Marsh* *President & Chief Strategist* *Content Company, Inc.*	*Reserved to Repeat Standing Room Only Sessions*	*Reserved to Repeat Standing Room Only Sessions*
11:30–11:50	**Conference Recap** *Jack Molisani, LavaCon and Joe Gollner, Gnostyx*				
11:50–12:30	**Closing Panel Discussion: The Future of Content** *Jack Molisani, Executive Director, LavaCon (moderator)*				

Optional Post-conference Workshop

Time					
1:30–4:30			**Train Generative AI Bots to Rock Your Docs (How I Learned to Stop Falling Behind and Love the Bot)** *Melanie Davis, President & CEO* *Dragonfly Diva Docs LLC*		

Welcome to the 2025 LavaCon Conference

on Content Strategy and Technical Communication Management

LavaCon® is a gathering place for content strategists, user experience designers, documentation managers, and other content professionals.

Our Mission: To help organizations increase revenue and decrease costs by solving content-related business problems.

It's one thing to hear people talk about content strategy and usability; it's another to meet peers who are successfully doing it. Our speakers are practicing industry professionals who are eager to share their best practices and lessons learned—both what worked and what didn't.

Choose from more than 70 sessions and workshops on how to plan, execute, and manage enterprise content development projects.

Ready for three days of great sessions, amazing food, and plenty of opportunities to network with your peers? Welcome to Atlanta!

Jack Molisani
Executive Director
The LavaCon Conference

facebook.com/LavaCon

linkedin.com/company/ 24798755

vimeo.com/LavaCon

Contents

Sponsors and Exhibitors

Many thanks to this year's sponsors and exhibitors!

Sapphire

acrolinx

argos
multilingual

eretto

madcap
software

paligo

RWS
Tridion

Platinum

bluestream
<content solutions>

congree
Unique Corporate Content

Fluid Topics

INGENIUX

Intuitive
STACK

precision
content
+ trust in your content

SCRIPTORIUM
The Content Strategy Experts

<dita> strategies

Gold

Silver

Other Sponsors

Sessions and Workshops

Sunday, October 5

7:00–   **Registration in Grand Ballroom Foyer and Coffee (breakfast on your own)**

8:00–Noon   **Half-Day Morning Pre-Conference Workshops**

Content Strategy Bootcamp
Noz Urbina, Principal, Urbina Consulting, and Joy Herbers, Content Strategist, Urbina Consulting

Is your content working as hard as it should for your business and users? This workshop introduces the fundamentals of content strategy and equips you with practical frameworks to build more effective content approaches.

In this workshop led by Noz Urbina, a pioneer in content methodology, and Joy Herbers, you'll discover how content strategy enables efficient and differentiating digital and even physical experiences. We'll explore the relationship between content strategy, content design, and content engineering, helping you understand how these (often confused) disciplines work together. Through real-world examples from global brands, you'll discover how to analyze your current content ecosystem, identify critical gaps, and develop actionable plans and deliverables that align with both user needs and business goals. You'll walk away with approaches you can implement immediately, whether you're managing a single channel or a more complex content ecosystem.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop:

- The fundamentals of content strategy and its different types
- How content strategy, content design, and content engineering interact and complement each other
- Methods to conduct a basic situational audit and identify opportunities for improvement

- Techniques for developing user-centered content that aligns with business objectives
- Approaches for creating consistent content experiences, regardless of your channel complexity
- Ways to measure content effectiveness through meaningful metrics and KPIs
- Strategies for building the business case for content initiatives in your organization

Content First Design
Sarah Johnson, Founder, Content First Design

Master the skills that set great content designers apart. This action-oriented workshop equips you to drive meaningful change in your work—immediately and with lasting impact. Remember, content isn't just words on a page—it's the foundation of every great digital experience. You'll see that when content leads, products are likely to perform better. Dive into thought-provoking discussions on UX and the evolving landscape of content design. Whether you're an industry leader or just starting out, these conversations challenge ideas and spark innovation. This one-day workshop will be a hands-on exploration of the tools and techniques used to put content first successfully. You'll leave with a new case study for your portfolio and get individual attention from the instructor. Network with content design peers, make connections, and have fun while mastering new skills.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop::

- The principles of content design
- Tools and techniques, such as empathy mapping

- How to design using content first o How to advocate for content design in your organization
- Testing methods for content both before and after release

JUMPin2it with Modern Marketing Magic: Branding, Tech & AI for Next-Level Success
Anita Booth, Vice President, Women in Payments, and Gabrielle Hailmann, Founder and CEO, 360 Integral Marketing

In today's fast-paced and competitive digital world, marketing success requires more than flashy campaigns and generic strategies. It demands a holistic approach that combines branding creativity, cutting-edge technology, and data-driven decision-making.

Join Anita Booth and Gabrielle Hailmann, co-hosts of the JUMPin2it podcast and authors of the JUMPin2it Breakthru Marketing Guide, as they share actionable strategies to elevate your marketing efforts. This interactive workshop will guide you through creating a cohesive brand foundation, harnessing the power of AI and automation, and building genuine audience connections. You'll leave equipped with the skills to prioritize marketing investments, track the right metrics, and achieve measurable results—without overspending.

Whether you're a women entrepreneur, small business owner, or marketing professional, this session will provide the tools and insights you need to innovate, inspire, and grow your business.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop:

- Equip attendees with actionable strategies for building a cohesive and impactful brand identity.
- Demonstrate the practical use of AI and automation to optimize marketing campaigns and improve ROI.
- Teach participants how to track essential marketing metrics and make data-informed decisions.

- Inspire attendees to foster authentic connections with their target audience, encouraging loyalty and long-term growth.
- Provide a budget-conscious framework for holistic marketing that avoids costly pitfalls.

Free Workshop: Hands-On with AI: How to Work Smarter, Not Harder with ChatGPT
Kat Reierson, Manager, Product Documentation, Docusign

Ever feel like you're spending too much time staring at a blank page or rewriting the same kinds of documents over and over? Maybe you've dabbled with ChatGPT but aren't sure if you're really getting the most out of it. Or maybe you haven't touched AI at all and just want a no-pressure space to figure it out.

This hands-on, half-day workshop is all about helping you work smarter with AI-no matter your role or experience level. Whether you want to build better templates, draft reports faster, or just make your daily tasks easier, we'll roll up our sleeves and explore how to get real, practical value from AI tools like ChatGPT.

The goal?

To make AI feel less overwhelming and way more useful in your daily work. No experience required-just bring your curiosity and let's explore together.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop:

- Good Prompts = Great Results—Learn how to ask AI for what you actually need (and avoid frustrating, vague responses).
- AI for Efficiency—Explore how ChatGPT can help with everything from documentation plans to brainstorming sessions to simplifying complex tasks.
- Templates, Drafts, and More—Work through real examples of how AI can speed up writing, Bring Your Own Challenges - Got a work task that's eating up your time? We'll troubleshoot it together, live using AI.
- Collaborative and Casual—No slides, no lectures-just a fun, interactive session where we'll share ideas, test prompts, and learn from each other

Noon–1:00	Lunch on your own

1:00–5:00	Half-Day Afternoon Pre-Conference Workshops

AI-Powered, Human-Approved: Content Strategy That Wins
Amanda Patterson, Senior Consultant, Comtech Services

GenAI is evolving content strategy, knowing how to effectively include GenAI is the real challenge. This workshop equips content professionals with practical knowledge ensuring they leave with real-world applications and strategies that can be implement immediately. Through real-world exercises and guided discussions, participants will explore the opportunities, risks, and best practices of integrating GenAI into content strategy to maintaining quality, compliance, and ethical integrity.

The workshop begins by introducing GenAI and content strategy. Attendees then dive into applications by experimenting with GenAI for content creation, exploring metadata and taxonomy requirements, and delivering content through self-service mechanisms. We'll conclude with discussions on AI governance, validation, and change management.

Bring your laptop or smartphone with an LLM available; activities will be tool agnostic but all demonstrations will be done using a paid account of ChatGPT.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop:

- AI-Driven Content Creation—Hands-on exercises in content analysis, generation, summarization, and optimization
- Metadata and Governance—Best practices for structuring AI-ready content and maintaining accuracy
- User Experience and AI—How chatbots and self-service solutions impact content strategy
- Implementation and Change Management—Creating a sustainable roadmap for AI integration
- Strategic AI Integration—Learn how to align GenAI with business objectives while maintaining quality control

- Change Management and Governance—Develop strategies to address changes in process in developing AI-driven content

Content First Design (continued)
Sarah Johnson, Founder, Content First Design

Master the skills that set great content designers apart. This action-oriented workshop equips you to drive meaningful change in your work—immediately and with lasting impact. Remember, content isn't just words on a page—it's the foundation of every great digital experience. You'll see that when content leads, products are likely to perform better. Dive into thought-provoking discussions on UX and the evolving landscape of content design. Whether you're an industry leader or just starting out, these conversations challenge ideas and spark innovation. This one-day workshop will be a hands-on exploration of the tools and techniques used to put content first successfully. You'll leave with a new case study for your portfolio and get individual attention from the instructor. Network with content design peers, make connections, and have fun while mastering new skills.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop::

- The principles of content design
- Tools and techniques, such as empathy mapping
- How to design using content first o How to advocate for content design in your organization
- Testing methods for content both before and after release

Escalation Exercise: A Content Buy-In Workshop
Gina Cairney, Lead Content Designer, and Thatcher Snyder, Senior Content Designer, Cvent

A perennial concern for content designers is finding buy-in: we need to advocate for what we do. What makes advocating difficult, often, is the lack of knowledge displayed by other roles - whether UX Design, Development, Product Management, Business Analysis, Marketing, or

others - about the problems content designers face day-to-day, which impede our ability to improve product content.

In this breakout session, we'll engage in an 'escalation exercise', which individual contributors can use to make product content issues apparent to developers and product managers, by presenting them with interactions that are difficult to describe or guide a user through. The intent of this exercise is to help build understanding across functions as to the challenges content designers face when working on product text.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How to get buy-in for their content work with other roles in their organization
- How to build a consensus on the importance of content design in a tech organization
- Take home a template to adapt for their teams

Free Workshop: They Already Sent a Poet, and It's You
Carol Hattrup, Senior Technical Writer

In the film *Contact*, astronomer and astronaut Ellie Arroway, awestruck by what she's witnessing as she arrives in a distant galaxy, realizes the workings of the cosmos would have been better described using poetry than scientific equations, admitting, "They should have sent a poet." So it's very fortunate that as content professionals we're all natural poets. Our skills are directly transferable to poetry, but, even better, this practical pairing means that when we practice the art of creating high quality poems, we also sharpen our content skills to become better in our career roles. It's our attention to concrete details that allows us to feed both better content and better prompts to AI so that AI, in turn, can share better content with the world. In the age of the smart machine the ability you already have to create good poetry is your secret weapon. Join other content professionals in this hands-on workshop as we learn how to create better technical documentation by writing poetry.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop:

- All the basic techniques you need to create solid, effective free-verse poems.
- Knowledge of the surprising similarities between poetry and tech writing, including, but not limited to, structure, brevity, word choice, iteration, tone, and attention to detail.
- Examples of two specific historical poetry structures you may not have realized you already know how to write.
- If you're in a hiring role, a new appreciation of creative writers who apply for tech content roles and the concrete skills they bring to your organization.
- Your own first draft of a poem about LavaCon 2025. You'll be invited to share your poem in the daily newsletter and at the annual Storytelling event during the conference. Sharing is optional, but, in any case, you'll have a unique conference keepsake & memory you can't buy in a souvenir store.
- Information and resources for how to continue your journey as a poet after the conference.

5:30–6:30	Welcome Reception

Monday, October 6

7:30–   **Registration and Breakfast**

8:30–9:00   **Welcome**

Jack Molisani, Executive Director, The LavaCon Conference

Join us as Jack welcomes you to the start of the 2025 LavaCon Conference.

9:00–9:20   **From Almost Laid Off to Indispensable: Future Proofing Your Content Career**

Caroline Roth, Vice President of Content Experience, Salesforce

SESION DESCRIPTION TO COME

9:20–9:40   **Leading, Mothering, and Letting Go of Perfect**

LJ Marinello, Senior Director, Cloud Strategy & Customer Success, Microsoft

What does it really mean to "have it all"? In this candid and empowering talk, Lisajoy Marinello-tech leader, speaker, and mom of four-unpacks the messy, beautiful reality of being a working mother in today's fast-paced world. With humor and honesty, she explores the myth of balance, the guilt we carry, and the silent strength it takes to lead at work and love at home. Drawing from personal stories and lessons learned in the boardroom and at the breakfast table, LJ offers a new perspective: that success isn't about doing everything perfectly-it's about being present, choosing what matters most, and learning to extend grace to ourselves. Whether you're a parent, a professional, or both, this talk is a reminder that leadership isn't just about climbing the ladder-it's also about raising the next generation while staying true to who we are.

Here's what you'll learn in this session:

- How to redefine what "having it all" really means in today's fast-paced, always-on world.
- Practical strategies for navigating guilt, burnout, and the pressure of perfection in both parenting and leadership.
- The importance of presence over perfection—how showing up authentically drives impact at home and at work.
- Ways to build a leadership style rooted in empathy, humor, and grace-without losing your edge or your sanity.
- How to lead with purpose while raising the next generation (whether that's your team, your kids, or both).

9:40–10:00   **I Drew the Five of Cups! A (tongue-in-cheek) Tarot Reading on the Future of the Content Creation in the Age of AI**

Lucie Hyde, Senior Director of User Experience & Design, PayPal

What destiny awaits content creators as AI transforms our craft? Join me for an unconventional exploration where tarot illuminates our professional journey. We'll start with The Five of Cups—a card of loss and possibility—as we examine how AI disrupts and enriches the content landscape.

Blending tarot symbolism with industry insights to navigate the balance between human imagination and algorithmic efficiency, together we'll explore how content professionals can thrive amid the uncertainty—and possibilities—AI brings.

Applicable for all content professionals, this talk offers a fresh perspective on reclaiming our creative purpose in an AI-driven world.

10:15–11:00	Breakout Sessions

Next on Netflix: Bridging Marketing and UX with a High-Impact Content Framework
Britt Stewart, Senior Content Designer, Netflix

When Netflix set out to reimagine building consumer anticipation for this year's upcoming content slate, the challenge wasn't just about marketing—it was about connection. How then to create a seamless, elevated experience that re-engages existing members, excites potential subscribers, and aligns marketing copy with the (often very different) product copy experience?

Enter Next on Netflix 2025, the first major promotional content experience built cross-functionally between marketing, editorial, product and engineering. This marketing experience resulted in record success as one of the top traffic drivers and most visited days ever on Tudum (Netflix's editorial fansite). And in this case study, I'll break down the content design framework that served as the connective tissue between all of the teams and really helped to prove how content designers can lead beyond the interface—as strategists, facilitators, and key decision-makers.

Here's what you'll learn in this session:

- Understand how to create and implement a content design framework for high-visibility marketing and product experiences
- Learn tactical approaches for navigating cross-functional complexity—balancing marketing goals, UX needs, and technical constraints
- See the real-life end result of achieving marketing x product copy cohesion, including the user journey considerations
- Gain insights into cross-channel (on and off-platform) metrics-driven storytelling
- Using your framework to advocate for content design's impact as a key connector and decision-maker in building a global marketing content experience

Healing a Broken Customer Experience
Fabrice Lacroix, CEO, Fluid Topics

In trying to do more for users, many companies have lost their way. More touchpoints—websites, user portals, helpdesks, LMS, and more—often lead to inefficiency and reduced user satisfaction due to inconsistent information, poor findability, and misaligned branding. The result? A disjointed and broken user experience.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- We will explore how the content stack spiraled out of control over time and present two key strategies to fix it: the "Do-It-All Platform" approach and the "Unified Best-of-Breed" model.
- We'll break down the pros and cons of each and provide practical guidance on unifying your customer experience. Attendees will learn the key elements for success and the pitfalls to avoid to ensure a seamless user journey with your company's products.

Why Content Strategy Is Important and How You Can Make a Case for It
Mary Southworth, Director of Content Strategy and Lee Bryars, Content Strategist, Fidelity Investments

This session is for leaders interested in learning why a focus on content strategy is so important for their businesses and for content specialists looking for ways to make a business case for improving their content strategy.

We'll focus on use cases from Fidelity's associate-facing content and its profound impact on the customer experience. This session will include a set of basic definitions of terms that can have many and changeable meanings, like content strategy, content engineering, and content design.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Focusing on content strategy to improve SEO, findability, and AI can improve customer experience and retention
- Getting leadership buy-in on content strategy by having the right elevator pitch, metrics, and use-cases to back it up

Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Content Strategy and Generation
Pranami Jhawar, Senior Software Engineer, Microsoft

In the era of digital transformation, artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the way we create and manage content. This session will explore how AI can be integrated into content strategy and generation to enhance creativity, efficiency, and engagement while reducing costs, generating revenue, and improving the customer experience. Attendees will learn about the latest AI tools and technologies, discover practical applications, and gain insights into the future of content creation. The presentation will provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI can be leveraged to automate content generation, personalize user experiences, and optimize content distribution.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Introduction to AI in Content Strategy
  - Overview of AI and its role in content creation.
  - Benefits of integrating AI into content strategy to reduce costs and enhance efficiency.
- AI Tools for Content Generation
  - Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools for text creation.
  - AI-powered writing assistants and content generators.
  - Image and video generation using AI.
- AI in Content Personalization
  - Leveraging AI to tailor content to individual user preferences.
  - Real-time content recommendations and dynamic content delivery to improve the customer experience.
- Optimizing Content Distribution with AI
  - AI-driven content scheduling and distribution strategies.

- Analyzing audience engagement using AI analytics to generate revenue.
- Case Studies and Real-World Applications
  - Examples of successful AI integration in content strategy and operations.
  - Lessons learned and best practices from industry leaders.

How to Really Choose the Right Content Management System for All
Jyothi Krishnamurthi, Senior Manager, Knowledge Engineering, and Rebecca Rhee, Manager, Knowledge Engineering, LinkedIn

Hear how this Knowledge Management team selected the right Content Management System (CMS) to meet business critical, cross-functional stakeholder, and content creation team needs to future-proof for scalability, efficiency, and a robust content creation and omni-channel delivery strategy.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

How the LinkedIn content and engineering teams navigated the CMS selection process with confidence by understanding key evaluation criteria, author and stakeholder needs, foundational future-proofing, and industry best practices.

Key takeaways include:

- Creating a well-rounded content tech selection team of content creators, content consumers, information architects, and decision-makers
- Defining business and infrastructure requirements and aligning them with tool capabilities
- Evaluating structured vs. unstructured content approaches and whether your team needs one or both
- Assessing integration needs for rich media, translation, taxonomy, and omnichannel content delivery
- Understanding vendor factors, including cost, support, and scalability
- Avoiding common pitfalls that lead to costly re-platforming efforts
- This session is designed for content creators, information architects, and decision-makers looking to modernize and optimize their content workflows.

Mastering the PESO Model: Unifying Content Strategy and AI for Maximum Marketing Impact
John Yembrick, Director of Content Strategy, Lockheed Martin

Competition for attention has never been fiercer. If you want to create scroll-stopping content that captures audiences across every user journey, you need a content strategy that unites internal and external communications. Learn how one major brand transformed its approach using the PESO framework—which seamlessly integrates Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned media—to maximize reach, engagement, and impact.

Whether you're a communications leader, content strategist, or marketer, this session will equip you with the tools to streamline your content strategy, integrate AI-driven efficiencies, and elevate what truly matters in your organization.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- New content consumption trends reshaping the PESO model and what they mean for your strategy
- Case study—The PESO framework in action, including:
  - Paid—Driving demand through strategic amplification, sponsorships, and advertising
  - Earned—Securing media placements for credibility and SEO impact
  - Shared—Building engaged communities across social platforms
  - Owned—Crafting videos and posts that boost awareness, loyalty, and conversions
- Harnessing Gen AI to optimize performance—how AI-driven content creation, personalization, and automation can supercharge your PESO strategy
- Transforming your organization to prioritize what matters most—Strategies for aligning resources, messaging, and execution to focus on high-impact initiatives
- Building a seamless content plan, calendar, and workflow that continuously feeds the content engine

- Essential KPIs and reporting tactics to measure success across the entire PESO ecosystem

Content in Color: How Strategists and Architects use Design to Bring Ideas to Life
Amber Swope, Information Architect, DITA Strategies, and Roland Muts, Product Management Consultant, Veer Agency

A successful content strategy not only depends upon the supporting information architecture (IA), but also on the stakeholder's ability to envision the art of the possible. By leveraging content design throughout the development process, strategists and architects can more efficiently collaborate with each other as well as facilitate stakeholder engagement.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

Integrating design, strategy, and IA can operationalize your content strategy and make it more tangible to your stakeholders.

The Leadership Multiplier: Systems to Scale Yourself and Your Team
Nicole LeBlanc, Manager, Content Design, Zillow

Most leaders aren't stuck—they're just too busy managing the present to build the future.

Between required meetings, alignment conversations, and managing ad hoc partner requests, leaders—whether managing teams or leading work as senior ICs—can easily find themselves in a cycle of reactive leadership, where deep strategic work takes a back seat.

At Zillow, we tackled this problem by designing systems that operationalized leadership—triaging work, clarifying engagement levels, and leveraging AI-driven content governance. The result? Faster execution, more time for strategic thinking, and measurable business impact.

This session will unpack the leadership systems we built at Zillow—and how you can create scalable structures in your own team.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How to scale leadership without becoming a bottleneck—Build systems that empower your team to move faster, make informed decisions, and execute effectively without constant oversight.

- The framework for managing ad hoc requests without derailing priorities—Learn how Zillow's Content Design team implemented a structured triage system to reduce workflow disruptions and distribute work equitably.
- How to create clarity in roles and engagement levels—Establish clear ownership models that help teams understand when to lead, co-design, or provide lightweight support—ensuring better alignment and efficiency.
- How to free up leadership time using AI and automation—See how Zillow leveraged AI-driven content governance to increase productivity by 25-50% while maintaining brand and UX standards.

The Role of Metadata in Managing Content in Unified Portals & AI-readiness
Andrew Douglas, Bluestream

Metadata plays a crucial role in managing and retrieving content within a unified portal, enhancing searchability, distribution, access, and retention.

We will present the key Functions of netadata:

- Search and Discovery—Metadata allows users to search for content using specific criteria such as content type, product category or name making it easier to find relevant information. Consistent metadata tags across systems enable quick pinpointing of the right sources for analysis and visualization.
- Distribution—Metadata values are used by applications to determine when and where content should be distributed or shared.
- Access and Security—Security measures applied to managed objects are often integrated into the metadata model.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

Core Components of Metadata Frameworks:

- Metadata Modeling—Structured standards offer baseline templates of metadata elements for descriptions, which organizations can extend to meet specific needs.
- Unified Metadata Foundation—Creating a common metadata foundation delivers insights and intelligence across all data sources.
- AI and Machine Learning—Applying AI and machine learning to unified metadata assists and trains AI as a powerful tool for AI based support. This AI training delivers an incredibly powerful AI ready repository that is a foundation for AI related projects such as AI driven chatbots.

What to Expect When You're Expecting (a CCMS)
Dawn Stevens, President, Comtech Services

Selecting a Component Content Management System (CCMS) is a critical decision that impacts content creation, management, and delivery for years to come. With numerous options available, organizations must assess their unique requirements to ensure they choose a system that aligns with their workflows, content strategy, and business goals. However, many organizations come into the process unprepared and with unrealistic expectations. This session will define key criteria to include in a requirements document, focusing on the key differentiators between CCMS options and on common wishlist items that can lead to disappointment. Attendees will learn what they can reasonably expect and not expect from a tool and how to navigate vendor selection with confidence.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Eighteen criteria to include in a CCMS requirements specification
- Six common, but unreasonable, wishlist items to set aside
- Key differentiators to examine when comparing CCMS options
- Evaluation and prioritization strategies for making a final selection

Noon–1:15   **Lunch and Vendor Demos in the Exhibit Hall, Comfort Dogs in the Grand Ballroom Foyer**

The AI-First Marketing Team Blueprint
Leslie Carruthers, President,
TheSearchGuru.com

Marketing leaders are drowning in tasks, struggling with bandwidth, and trying to prove ROI—all while AI is reshaping the game. But AI isn't just a tool; it can be an extension of your team. This session reveals a blueprint for building an AI-first marketing team that automates high-impact tasks—content, SEO, research, and campaign optimization—so your team can focus on strategy and results. Learn how to structure AI roles, integrate the right tools, and free up 10+ hours per week while improving performance. Stop experimenting—start scaling with AI.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Design an AI-powered marketing team—leveraging multiple AI personas or research, content, SEO, and campaign optimization
- Integrate agentic search for real-time competitor insights and trend detection
- Balance AI execution with human oversight—freeing up time while maintaining strategic control

Expanding Self-Service for a Better Customer Experience
Lief Erickson, Principal Content Strategist, Intuitive Stack, and Dave Marotz, Director, Product Innovation, Surescripts

Customers needed help. But the answers they were looking for were buried in a rarely-used system. Instead of self-service, they had no choice but to rely on customer success engineers—driving up costs and bottle-necking on-boarding.

This case study shows how a smarter content approach is on track to reduce on-boarding time by 70%. By tagging content to specific roles, mapping it to the customer journey, and eliminating or fixing redundant efforts, we've built a system that actually works. If you're looking to take the pressure off your support team while making things easier for customers, this session will show you how.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

Many organizations face some version of the same problem: how to efficiently get new clients onto and using their platform or using their project. For revenue and profitability reasons, this needs to be accomplished with as quickly and as low-touch as possible. Our approach is producing results, and is general enough to be applicable and of interest to other organizations.

Empowering Teams for Success with Building Agentic Experiences
Caryn Horowitz, Senior Manager, Enterprise Content Strategy, LinkedIn, and Jyothi Krishnamurthi, Senior Manager, Knowledge Engineering

Using real-life examples of multiple AI-powered experiences like virtual chat agents and agentic guides, we'll break down the end-to-end cycle of using your content as the basis for advanced AI models, with a focus on putting the right frameworks, relationships, and KPIs in place to set your team up for success:

- Align—Understanding the business goals of various AI experiences and how they impact your content strategy
- Scope—Deciding what content sets to include or exclude based on business needs and risk tolerance
- Design—How content models and methodologies impact LLM success
- Build—Defining the role that content strategy and knowledge engineering teams play in partnership with cross-functional teams
- Validate—Exploring the benefits of content teams participating in this process
- Measure success—Defining KPIs related to content ingestion and user experience
- Iterate—Creating feedback loops with cross-functional teams to continuously monitor user experiences

Here's what you'll learn from this session::

Concrete tips for setting your teams up for success in the end-to-end cycle of using your content as the basis for advanced AI models and tell the story of how your content drives business value through these channels.

Honey, I Shrunk our Content Performance with GenAI
Michael Mannhardt, President, Congree Language Technologies

We are all talking about and dealing with GenAI in various ways in our content world, but how does content creation with GenAI really become suitable for companies?

The use of GenAI in content creation generates some challenges:

- How can I ensure that the use of GenAI does not ruin compliance with the company specific content targets I have created and defined?
- How can I use GenAI to support content creation while ensuring that meeting my defined content targets helps me to create compelling content? Content that contributes to a great customer experience and helps to increase the revenue of my organization? Content that performs?

This is where the challenge lies: with GenAI, another "author" and tool have been added, with a high risk of ruining compliance with your content targets and shrinking your customer experience.

In this presentation, Michael Mannhardt, will take a look at this questions and shed light on the various aspects.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- GenAI can provide excellent support for the content creation process

- But GenAI has risks that jeopardize compliance with company-specific content targets
- How can I ensure that my content targets are met even when using GenAI?
- How can linguistic intelligence help me to identify and minimize the risks regarding content targets when using GenAI?
- How can linguistic intelligence support me in making the use of GenAI more efficient and flexible?

Automating Large Scale Rewriting Using Gen AI
Charles Dowdell, Manager Technical Communications, Komatsu NA

This is a case study where Komatsu NA successfully tackled a large scale systemic rewriting of technical manuals using Gen AI automation. These technologies have matured to the point that success is possible and cost effective whereas a few years previously it would not have been.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How to scope an immense rewrite project
- Identify risks and mitigate for a similar large scale Gen AI project
- How to look beyond "it's too difficult or too expense to tackle" mindset
- What skills are needed and where to find them
- Moving beyond a "victim mentality" in Technical Communications

---

2:15–3:00   **Breakout Sessions**

Critical Persuasion: A D&D-Themed Guide to Rolling for Influence Without Authority
Erica McPeek, Transformations Care Network

Critical Persuasion: A D&D-Themed Guide to Rolling for Influence Without Authority

Grab your dice and prepare for an epic quest where the greatest treasure of all is... stakeholder buy-in! Like a Dungeons & Dragons campaign, navigating stakeholders is an adventure filled with obstacles, puzzles, and risky maneuvers.

In this session, you'll uncover the secret stats of stakeholder personas—from risk-averse Tanks to overworked Healers—and learn how to wield persuasion, empathy, data, and storytelling as

your ultimate tools. We'll tackle "boss battles" with humor and strategy, giving you practical skills to align goals, handle resistance, and inspire collaboration.

Whether you're a seasoned strategist or new to the influence game, you'll leave ready to roll a natural 20 in stakeholder management. Assemble your party, bring your character sheets, and join the adventure—this is one campaign you won't want to miss!

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Stakeholder Mapping—Learn how to identify key stakeholders, analyze their

priorities, and uncover potential challenges or support opportunities.

- Tailored Communication Approaches—Master the skill of adjusting your approach to resonate with different personalities and motivations, ensuring maximum impact through effective use of data, storytelling, and empathy to gain buy-in from even the most resistant stakeholders.
- Conflict Navigation—Gain strategies to address disagreements or pushback constructively while maintaining collaboration and progress.
- Building Momentum Through Progress—Learn how to implement quick-win strategies that build trust and set the stage for larger successes.

Panel Discussion: The Role of Structured Content and DITA in Agentic AI & RAG

Dawn Stevens, President, Comtech Services (moderator)

Alvin Reyes, Customer Engagement Manager, RWS

Noz Urbina, Omnichannel Strategist, Urbina Consulting

Colleen Jones, President, Content Science

Rob Hanna, CEO and Co-founder, Precision Content

Lief Erickson, Principal Content Strategist, Intuitive Stack

Harald Stadlbauer, General Manager, NINEFEB GmbH

Spotlight: How the Component Content Alliance (CCA) is Shaping the Future of AI-driven Content

The Component Content Alliance (CCA) unites industry leaders to explore how structured content, DITA, and metadata enable Agentic AI and next-gen Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG). Unlike traditional RAG, Agentic RAG allows AI agents to make decisions, interact with data, and generate more contextually accurate responses. To be business-ready, AI needs structured, reusable, and semantically rich content.

Why Attend?

- Learn how structured content improves AI-driven retrieval.
- Discover how DITA and metadata enhance GenAI performance.

- Avoid AI hallucinations and improve trust in AI-generated content.
- See how structured content cuts localization costs and accelerates publishing.
- Hear from CCA experts on the best practices and pitfalls.

If you work in AI, content strategy, or localization this session will provide actionable insights on making your content AI-ready.e.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How structured content fuels AI—The impact of metadata, tagging, and information architecture on retrieval accuracy.
- DITA and AI: A perfect match?—Why component-based content (DITA) enhances AI-driven applications.
- AI and enterprise content ops—Challenges and strategies for scaling structured content with AI.
- Real-world implementations—Case studies on AI-driven automation and content workflows.

Top Five Ways to Harness the Power of AI Co-Pilots

Scott Abel, Content Strategy Evangelist, Heretto

Discover how AI co-pilots are changing the game for technical documentation professionals. In this session, Scott Abel, The Content Wrangler, will share practical ways AI can help technical writers and information developers work faster, smarter, and more effectively.

Explore how these tools can go beyond generating text to save time, enhance content quality, streamline workflows, and improve the user experience. If you're looking to elevate your content operations and make your workflows more efficient, this session is a must-attend!

In this session, you will learn how co-pilots:

- Save time and effort (streamline workflows)
- Enable English as a second language writers
- Improve content quality and usefulness (simplify, enforce consistency, locate and fix errors)
- Reduce risk (prevent problematic terminology, identify conflicting content)
- Enforce tagging and structure rules

From Vision to Implementation: Adoption Techniques for Enterprise Content Teams
Eeshita Grover, Senior Director, Content Design, Cisco

Content teams are pushed against time to start adopting new trends and technologies, be it best practices or maybe even Gen AI. That's a challenge for most Enterprise Content teams because of lack of resources and absence in knowledge and experience.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Effective change management
- Leading change and influencing adoption

3:00–4:00   **Snack Break in the Exhibit Hall**

4:00–4:20   **The Impossible Dream: Unified Authoring for Customer Content**

Sarah O'Keefe, CEO, Scriptorium

Is it really possible to configure enterprise content—technical, support, learning & training, marketing, and more—to create a seamless experience for your end users? Sarah O'Keefe discusses the reality of enterprise content operations: do they truly exist in the current content landscape? What obstacles hold the industry back? How can organizations move forward?

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- The challenging status quo in enterprise content ops o. The reasons that we don't have any good solutions
- A vision of the way forward

4:20–4:40   **The Experimentation Mindset: How Testing Transforms Content Strategy**

Melinda Belcher, Head of Experience Design, JPMorgan Chase

What if a small tweak in your content could double engagement? In this talk, we'll explore how experimentation—through A/B testing, personalization, and user insights—can transform content strategy into measurable success. Using real-world examples, we'll uncover the power of testing small changes, learning from failure, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Whether you're a designer, marketer, or strategist, you'll walk away with a new mindset: content isn't just created—it's discovered through experimentation.

Here's what you'll learn in this session:

- The Power of Experimentation—How A/B testing, multivariate testing, and personalization can drive engagement and business success.
- Why Small Tweaks Matter—How minor content changes can lead to major performance improvements.
- User Insights Beyond the Data—The role of qualitative feedback in optimizing content experiences.
- Building a Culture of Testing—How to foster an experimentation mindset within teams and organizations.
- Overcoming Resistance to Change—Strategies for addressing skepticism and resource constraints.
- Real-World Examples—Lessons from successful (and unsuccessful) content experiments.
- How to Get Started—Actionable steps for running your first experiment and scaling testing efforts.

4:40–5:00   **TBA**

Patrick Bosek, CEO, Heretto

5:00–6:30   **Networking Reception**

8:00–10:00   **Annual Live Storytelling Event**

Location TBD

From poetry to stories and stand-up, grab your beverage of choice and hang out with your LavaCon peeps as we "talk story" (as they say in Hawaii).

They'll be a place to sign up if you want to participate (five minutes per person).

No prior speaking experience required!

Tuesday, October 7

7:30–8:30   **Breakfast**

8:30–8:50   **Unlock Funding: How to Persuade Leaders to Invest in your Vision**

Wendy Richardson, Former Mastercard Executive and President of Managing Up

Securing funding from leaders or decision-makers is often seen as a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. In this TED talk, Wendy Richardson, a seasoned strategist and funding advocate, shares actionable techniques to bridge the gap between ideas and investment.

Through compelling stories, practical frameworks, and surprising psychological insights, this talk reveals how to:

- Frame your request in a way that aligns with leadership priorities.
- Build a persuasive narrative supported by data and emotion.
- Overcome common objections with confidence and empathy.
- Cultivate long-term trust and credibility with decision-makers.

Whether you're a nonprofit director, an entrepreneur, or an employee advocating for resources within your organization, this talk will empower you to transform "no" into "yes" and turn your vision into reality.

8:50–9:10   **Why Technical Writers Should Care About Governance, Risk, and Compliance (Even if It Sounds Boring)**

Megan Gilhooly, Senior Director GRC Content, OneTrust

Let's face it—Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) doesn't sound as exciting as crafting brilliant user guides or usable doc portals. But in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the intersection of technical content development and Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) gives you a starring role in solving regulatory problems. Megan will explore how the practices of technical documentation are shaping—and being shaped by—the needs of privacy, compliance, and AI governance. What is GRC? How do changing regulations impact content development? How can your skills help tackle compliance challenges, support AI governance, and keep organizations out of legal hot water? From guiding privacy teams through the maze of ever-changing rules to crafting documentation that keeps AI on its best behavior, you'll see how your tech writing chops make a real difference in the world of GRC and learn how to level up your skills to crush compliance requirements with clarity and confidence.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- GRC isn't just for lawyers—and your writing superpowers can save the day.
- Learn how to make friends with Privacy and Compliance teams (hint: they need your help).
- Find out why structured content (think DITA XML) is the unsung hero of staying compliant in a world of constant change.
- Explore how your documentation could literally train AI to be smarter and safer.
- Walk away with practical tips to become a GRC hero in disguise.

| 9:10–9:30 | **Broken Trust, Broken Docs: Fixing the Hidden Gaps Undermining Your Technical Content** |

Rob Hanna, CEO and Co-founder, Precision Content

Trust isn't just a virtue in technical communication—it's the foundation of user confidence and loyalty. In an age of information overload, users gravitate toward content they trust and abandon what feels unreliable. This keynote will explore why trust is the ultimate value-add for your documentation and the products it supports. We'll touch on strategies and technologies that increase your trust quotient; describe how AI can enhance credibility or erode trust depending on its implementation; and look at emerging technologies like agentive AI, blockchain, and Content-as-a-Service (CAAS) to see how they can turbocharge trust and reinforce your content as the single source of truth. Closing the trust gap requires action. Let's start the conversation and build documentation that users trust, rely on, and return to—because in today's digital world, few things are more valuable than trust.

- Here's what you'll learn from this session:
- The impact of poorly written structured content on human and machine performance
- What's needed now to improve trust in your content
- Emerging technology that could boost trust to the next level

| 9:45–10:30 | **Breakout Sessions** |

What Marketing and Sales Can Teach the Rest of Us About Customer Experience
Sara Feldman, Director of Member Engagement, CFSE

I've come to see that mindset as a limiting belief. While post-sales teams focus on "what customers really need," Marketing and Sales have spent decades mastering how to influence behaviors, capture attention, and build lasting connections—often with bigger budgets and highly refined strategies.

This session explores presales approaches that can enhance post-sales engagement:

- Remarketing—Meet customers where they are
- Segmentation—Deliver relevance and personalization from their perspective
- Nurture Campaigns—Frame content around helping customer needs, not just promoting your product

We'll dive into how these techniques can elevate post-sales content design, improve self-service, and deepen customer relationships.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Leave with guidance and motivation to borrow effective tactics from their colleagues in Marketing and Sales—plus a practical framework to apply these strategies to their own work.
- Walk away with actionable steps to realign your content experience to optimize your customer experience

Creating (Imperfect) Content for Perfectionists
Jael Schultz, Content Architect at a global financial institution

This isn't a tactical talk, but a philosophical talk about how pursuit of perfection and looking for the "right" answer can get in the way of our work. I'll discuss how creating perfect content is a myth, and outline a new philosophy to embrace that focuses on being imperfect. I'll also cover some practical ways to apply this in terms of how we collaborate with partners, the questions we use in our toolkit, and the way we assess ourselves.

How can adopting a "less-than-perfect" mindset help us create better content and strategy? As practitioners in a field that requires creating solutions for complex problems and diverse audiences, we spend a lot of time searching for the right answer.

Let's discuss how adopting a philosophy of imperfection can help us be more effective in our work, and more collaborative and persuasive with our partners. We'll also examine some practical questions we can add to our project toolkit to be imperfectly perfect.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- A shift in our philosophy that means we don't have to be the expert all the time
- A list of practical questions for defining and executing projects to can add to your content toolkit
- Re-affirmation in the importance of the work we do, and how that can free us instead of constrain us

Building the Case for Content Operations in Complex Organizations
Trey Smith, Senior Program Supervisor, TechPubs Lead, Honeywell

When you are in a complex organization, it is easy to get lost or push to the side. But content strategy is critical to drive many innovations, including every AI initiative. This case study will review Honeywell's technical content ecosystem journey over the past 3 years and the challenges we are continuing to face. I will share what opportunities I look for to drive our content needs and bring visibility to the right leaders. I will also cover content operations lessons learned, best practices I deploy within my team, building a business case for tools and process improvements, and how you can start networking within your organization. Come join me in this deep dive case study to see what it takes to be noticed in a complex organization.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How to build a case for quality content operations in an enterprise or complex company structure.
- Lessons learned throughout the change management and content migration process.
- Build a business case internally for the growing dependency on content operations and innovations required to develop a content ecosystem.
- How to find, engage, and win over leadership to drive innovation in the content operations space.

Am I The AI Luddite? Questioning the Use of AI in Content Creation
Alan Porter, Founder/CCO, The Content Pool

At Lavacon 2024, I sat through numerous presentations in which AI was mentioned, especially in terms of its potential impact on Content Operations, or how it was being used to create content.

Partway through the conference, I became aware that almost no-one was questioning its use, and this concerned me. So after the conference I wrote a piece in my weekly newsletter entitled "Am I The AI Luddite"? expressing that concern. It continues to be the most popular edition of the newsletter and prompted other blog posts and commentary.

In this presentation I will revisit my concerns, define what we mean by AI, and take a look at where we are with AI adoption for Content Operations, and outline the questions we should be asking of ourselves as content creators and strategists, and the questions we should be asking of the organizations we work for in terms of the rush to adopt AI solutions.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- What exactly do we mean by AI?
- How generative AI is different

- The moral questions around generative AI
- The environmental impact of AI
- Is there really a business case for AI?
- The questions you should be asking about AI

Programmatic Loves Structure: Why You Need a DITA-first Headless Strategy
Jim Edmunds and Nathan Eggen, Ingeniux

SESSION DESCRIPTION TO COME

10:45–11:30   **Breakout Sessions**

How to Build an AI-supported Buyer's Journey
Cara McDonald, CEO and Founder, Content Matterz

Join Content Matterz CEO and founder Cara McDonald for a quick trip to learn how to use the B2B buyer's journey, plus our helpful friend AI, to your advantage to create content that moves contacts through the funnel faster.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Renewed knowledge about the B2B buyer's journey and how to apply it
- AI tools (and exact prompts to use) to make your content creation process smoother
- Inspiration for your next campaign and how to approach it

Building Trust in Your Content: Measuring Human and Machine Performance on Technical Content
Rob Hanna, CEO, Precision Content

Tech pub groups continue to wrestle over exactly how generative AI will help to shape their futures. This spurs the question: Is the technology ready for us?. More likely though we should be asking if we are ready for the technology. Many of us have seen compelling demonstrations of what is possible, each footnoted with the caveat that your mileage may vary. Beware of the familiar adage: Garbage-in-Garbage-out. But who can tell you exactly what garbage looks like? Semantic enrichment, knowledge models, and metadata will only carry your content so far towards machine-readiness. It's the precision of the content itself that will make all the difference. Join Rob Hanna for this presentation as he walks

you through his approach to benchmarking and evaluating human performance on technical content. Rob will walk you through before and after content and discuss usability lab methods and results. Afterall, if you can't figure it out, how do you expect a machine to figure it out?

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- The concepts of trust in your content and what it means for usability
- Human factors for trust and issues we face with trust with generative AI
- List common issues implementors face with building LLMs and technology solutions for their businesses
- About our content usability labs for measuring human and machine performance on content
- The importance of benchmarking content against a rigorous content standard

Making the Business Case for Content Tools: How to Advocate for the Right Tools and Secure Leadership Buy-In
Bridget O'Donnell, Senior Content Strategist, Alibaba Group

You've identified bottlenecks in your content workflow. Now what? Before adopting a new tool—whether it's an AI writing assistant, localization platform or CMS—you need to convince leadership that it's worth the investment.

This session will provide a step-by-step approach to making a strong business case for content tools that help teams work more efficiently and scale their operations. You'll walk away with

actionable strategies to assess your org's needs, compare available solutions and define success metrics that demonstrate impact.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How to identify workflow challenges that slow down content production and impact scalability
- A framework for evaluating tools and presenting them as a solution to managers and stakeholders
- How to track success metrics that showcase value and operational impact

The Slow Adoption of Gen AI Across the Enterprise—And What You Can Do About It
Colleen Jones, President, Content Science

While individual uptake of generative AI appears swift, organizational adoption is a different story. Generative AI in an enterprise means big challenges and big opportunities. This session will take a well-researched closer look at the situation and what your organization can do about it.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Crucial statistics about the state of content and AI today
- Why enterprises face increasing pressure to compete on customer experience and, consequently, to transform with gen AI
- Why, despite this pressure, adoption of gen AI has slowed and what this means for content leaders

- The 3 Ps of responding instead of reacting to gen AI
- The differences between machine learning and deep learning AI, and how those differences shed light on AI risks and potential for content
- 6 areas of risk to consider when planning to deploy generative AI
- 5 considerations for promoting content-led, AI-driven transformation
- Examples and perspectives from diverse organizations and industries

Smart Content for Smart Learning: Transforming DITA Into LMS Courses
Alan Pringle, COO, Scriptorium

Scriptorium launched Learning DITA 10 years ago. When the site struggled to support an ever-increasing number of students, we faced a dilemma. How could we build a new site with a better learning experience while using the same DITA source files as the foundation?

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How we transform DITA content into LMS e-learning courses:
- Create content and assessments using the DITA Learning and Training specialization
- Develop an automated SCORM publishing pipeline
- Customize how the Moodle LMS integrates SCORM packages into the learning experience

11:30–1:00	Lunch and Vendor Demos in the Exhibit Hall, Comfort Llamas in the Grand Ballroom Foyer

1:15–2:00	Breakout Sessions

25 Tools in 25 Weeks: Solving Marketing Challenges with Human-Tested AI Solutions
Julie Hochheiser Ilkovich, Managing Partner, Masthead

With countless AI tools promising to revolutionize marketing, how do you know which ones truly deliver? The Masthead team put AI to the test, trying 25 tools in 25 weeks to uncover what actually works. In this session, we'll share our biggest wins (and failures), revealing the AI solutions that streamlined workflows,

elevated marketing strategies, and enhanced content creation. You'll walk away with a clear roadmap for choosing and integrating AI tools that fit your business—plus insights on which ones aren't worth your time. Skip the trial-and-error and learn from our hands-on experience!

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- The business challenges you can and should be solving using AI tools, which include streamlining processes, elevating

marketing practices, and supporting content creation.
- Which AI tools helped to solve each challenge, and which are not worth your time.
- Tips for integrating AI tools into your own best practices, especially when team members are hesitant to use them.

Building a Content Strategy with a Small Team (or No Team at All)
Nick Kakanis, Content Designer III, Pilot Company

Three years ago, I made a dramatic career shift from the recycling industry and took a role as the sole copywriter on a small team at a large company. Fast-forward to today, I am a content designer and content strategist, and my team has exploded to a whopping three writers supporting 15 creative/product designers. We urgently needed to implement a content strategy into a well-established organization that was not structured for it. After attending LavaCon 2024, I applied what I learned to expand my sphere of influence and developed a content strategy for our growing department.

Whether you're a seasoned pro looking to streamline efficiency or someone who's suddenly become "the content strategy person" through necessity (yep, I see you), you'll walk away with practical advice for fighting that rewarding battle of establishing, maintaining, and evolving your team's content strategy. It's time to poke our heads out of the trenches and march forward!

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Mastering the Art of Buy-In—Gain proven strategies to pitch your content strategy to leadership using data, structured arguments, and compelling storytelling.
- Clarifying Roles Across Teams—Leverage writers and non-writers by creating clear roles with writing, editing, publishing, and approvals to foster seamless collaboration.
- Leveraging AI without Losing Control—AI can't save you, but it's a great paddle for navigating content strategy. Pair it with structured processes to delegate the heavy lifting effectively.
- Inspiring Team Engagement—Leadership buy-in is step one; team alignment is step two.

- Maintaining and Evolving Strategy—Use audits, feedback loops, and a central content council to ensure your strategy stays cohesive and scalable over time.
- Simplifying Tools and Amplifying Efficiency—Identify the right tools, cut redundancies, and design workflows to streamline your team's operations.

Rethinking Content Metrics with AI: Proving Business Value and Driving Strategic Decisions
Sofiya Minnath, Senior Technical Writing Manager, fabric inc.

In the age of AI-powered content creation, documentation must evolve beyond outdated metrics like page views and word counts. Traditional KPIs fail to capture documentation's true business impact, making it essential to embrace AI-driven insights that reveal how content influences user experience, product adoption, and operational efficiency.

This session will explore how technical writing and content strategy teams can leverage analytics to measure documentation's value more effectively. Attendees will learn how to use data-driven narratives to secure stakeholder buy-in, align content strategies with business objectives, and position documentation as a key business driver.

Through real-world case studies, I'll share how AI integrations uncover user behavior patterns, content gaps, and business insights. Attendees will gain practical strategies for building dynamic, cross-functional content ecosystems that enhance user satisfaction, reduce costs, and optimize content impact.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How to go beyond traditional KPIs and use AI-driven metrics to measure documentation's real impact
- Strategies for aligning content metrics with broader business goals to prove ROI
- How to leverage AI-powered analytics to uncover user trends, content gaps, and improvement opportunities
- Ways to use data storytelling to secure stakeholder buy-in and drive content initiatives
- Real-world examples of how AI can reduce costs, streamline workflows, and improve customer experience

AI Content Strategy: Unifying Enterprise Teams, Redefining Authority
Jeff Coyle, SVP, Strategy, Siteimprove & MarketMuse

This session demystifies AI Search and how a focus on AI-driven content strategy can break down silos and transform an enterprise. We'll focus on real-world content strategy and operations use cases and how a focus on authenticity can bring all teams together. Importantly, we'll address the human side of integrating AI into your content workflow. You'll learn strategies for weaving AI tools into established content processes while keeping the expert-in-the-loop. By the end of this session, you'll see how AI can be a strategic ally in delivering cohesive content experiences and in making your content more discoverable and effective across the enterprise.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How definitions of content quality are changing at enterprises and at search engines
- Unifying content strategy across silos
- Boosting efficiency and reducing costs
- Integrating AI into content workflows
- Ensuring consistency and governance

How We Used DITA to Automate Testing, Improve Gen AI Accuracies, and Lower Costs
Alexander Lum and Richard Kung, Ciena

Is your Content Development team often pressed to "show its worth"? In 2024, we were presented an opportunity, by our VP, to brainstorm ideas how we can leverage our product content to improve efficiencies.

Our team presented an idea that leveraged our DITA source content to help our product verification team (aka QA) automate their testing effort. Our VP was encouraged by our proposal and tasked us with collaborating on a proof-of-concept (POC). After a few months of working alongside a member of the PV team, we developed an innovative automation script that saved the verification team 100s of hours per release, solidified our content in our generative AI experiences, and validated our team's contributions and impact.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How and why we adopted a DITA authoring workflow
- Our DITA best practices and procedural topic templates
- How to engage with external teams to deliver solutions that achieve common goals
- Lessons learned
- Planning POCs and scaling up
- How generative AI helps automation and how our PV automation helps our generative AI mission

At the end of this session, you will gain insight into how you can show your content development team's "value" to some of your key cross-functional teams and executives.

2:15–3:00	Breakout Sessions

Owning Your Brand Narrative in an AI-Driven World
Katie Tweedy, Director Content Marketing, Collective Measures

As generative AI, like Google's AI Overviews, continues to expand in search, brands must work to control their narrative or risk losing their voice to outside influences. Even if we can't directly control gen AI outputs, we can influence the results. AI thrives on clarity, and without a clear and consistent brand presence, brands will be vulnerable to misinformation and weakened

authority. This session dives into how AI systems understand your brand, and how to regain control of your brand narrative.

Attendees will gain an understanding of how to own their brand in today's SEO world. We'll break down practical tactics for assessing brand visibility, identifying brand gaps to protect brand reputation, optimizations to improve AI search results, and understanding how brand search frequency impact even nonbrand rankings. By the end, attendees will be equipped to protect

their brand's identity in an AI-dominated environment because owning your brand is no longer optional—it's essential.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How to identify brand gaps and detect misinformation, allowing them to take control of their brand narrative and safeguard their digital reputation.
- How to initiate a brand audit using effective tactics, ensuring their brand is clearly defined and accurately interpreted by AI-driven search.
- Gain strategies to evaluate and enhance brand visibility, improving how their brand appears in search results.

Zero to Hero: Turning the Knowledge Management Kaleidoscope
Mirhonda Studevant, Consulting Director, USA, C-Sync

Like a kaleidoscope, every organization's information contains a variety of shapes and forms. Knowledge managers are often tasked with major directives where they have full accountability but no formal authority. This session explores one knowledge management journey and the drastic differences between implementations of three knowledge bases within two divisions of LinkedIn. By identifying patterns, building relationships, determining priorities, and tracking metrics, this duo transformed reluctant benefactors into high adopters.

In this session, you'll learn strategies and methods to:

- Move from unstructured to structured content
- Establish content ownership
- Find content champions and allies
- Evangelize a new KMS
- Integrate KM practices into existing workstreams
- Provide snapshot metrics to executive leaders
- Avoid maintenance mode pitfalls

Customer Connection: Turning Feedback into Quantifiable Results
Pam Noreault, Principal Information Architect, Ellucian, Inc.

Dive into this session to focus on gathering and implementing customer feedback and to discover innovative ways to measure and report the results. Gain valuable insights on how to prioritize feedback that enhances customer experience while tracking your success.

In this session, you will:

- Hear Real Stories—Listen to firsthand accounts, observations, and ideas from fellow participants.
- Share Your Own Experiences—Contribute your unique perspectives and learn from others.
- Explore Metrics—Understand different metrics, and how they can drive meaningful change with simple reporting.
- Learn Lessons—Discover practical lessons learned and actionable strategies to implement in your own work.

Walk away energized with fresh ideas and new approaches to try out.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Gather customer feedback—Techniques and best practices for collecting valuable insights from your users.
- Prioritize feedback—Strategies to effectively prioritize feedback to enhance user experience.
- Measure success—Innovative ways to measure and report the results of implemented changes.
- Share real stories and observations— Insights from firsthand accounts and experiences shared by fellow participants.
- Understand important metrics— Understanding key metrics and how they can drive meaningful change.
- Use practical lessons learned—Practical lessons and actionable strategies to implement in your own work.
- Apply new ideas—Fresh approaches and new things to try out in your own projects.

A Tale of Ten Productivity Prompts
Gavin Austin, Principal Technical Writer, Salesforce

Feeling swamped by content deadlines? Ready to ditch writer's block and unlock a new level of content productivity with generative AI? Want to know how a global content team uses prompts to create everything from videos to complex technical documentation? In this session, you'll learn:

- Examples of AI prompts used to create online help, release notes, video scripts, and more
- Strategies for integrating AI into your existing content workflows and quality assurance processes
- Methods for training, sharing, and promoting AI use within a large organization

Docs-as-Code, DITA, or Unstructured Authoring?
Hannah Kirk, The Pink-Haired Content Strategist

I will demystify the complex world of docs-as-code, DITA, XML, and unstructured authoring platforms. Whether you're a seasoned content professional or just dipping your toes into technical documentation, this presentation is tailored to help you make informed decisions about the best tools and practices for your rapidly-evolving business needs.

I will explain the key differences between these publishing approaches, discuss their pros and cons, and provide practical advice on choosing the right one for different scenarios. By the end of this session, you'll have a clear understanding of each approach and be able to determine which one best aligns with your project requirements.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- The differences between authoring and publishing platform types: Unstructured, docs-as-code, DITA, and other XML/structured options.
- The pros and cons of the different authoring and publishing platform types
- What kind of authoring and publishing platforms are best for what kind of situations
- How to apply this knowledge to your project requirements and understand which kind of platform to use

3:00–3:45	Snacks and Vendor Demos in the Exhibit Hall

3:45–4:30	Breakout Sessions

The Four Pillars of Creating Findable and Usable Content
Viqui Dill, Documentation Specialist, Navy Federal Credit Union

Readers are raiders. Style guides use to our advantage the way people's brains work and get our audience back to work.

The purpose of this presentation is to start a discussion about how people read, reinforcing the cognitive science behind the elements of our style guides.

We're going to look at the things we already know and put them together in a new way. These topics are part of the CPTC curriculum. As I was studying, I gained a new appreciation for

how we do business. So let's look at the tools we already know in a new way, based on the science behind our intuition.

Technical communicators will intuitively know many of the lessons discussed and will feel empowered and encouraged to practice these principles in all our communication deliverables.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

The presentation has four parts, each reinforcing technical communication principles we already use:

- How usability heat maps validate our style guides and content strategy
- How creating simple user profiles streamlines content creation and document approval processes

- How consistency of structure and vocabulary makes our content searchable, findable, and discoverable
- How plain language and improved accessibility benefit all readers, not just the diverse segments

Let's All Get Along: We Need Bridges, not Silos
Leslie Farinella, President, Content Rules

AI is raising the bar. If we don't work together and break down the silos that separate our content, systems, and processes, we will struggle to meet user expectations.

There are good reasons to centralize our teams, systems, and workflows. At the same time, there are good reasons to fine-tune our operations to meet the unique needs of each discipline. What we really need are hybrid operating models that allow us to specialize in delivering domain-specific business outcomes when necessary while centralizing efforts elsewhere.

We need to build bridges that allow information to flow freely, providing better customer and employee experiences.

In this session, we:

- Show you where to look for areas of collaboration (think enhanced search and discovery, tech investments, and AI solutions)
- Provide guidance on building a compelling business case for investing in this new way of working
- Share strategies for building partnerships across silos between centralized and specialized operations

Use the Force of Your Words: The Jedi Path to Better Content
Joe Gollner, Managing Director, Gnostyx Research Inc. and Carol Hattrup, Senior Technical Writer

We were all drawn to our calling by a love of words and a passion for connecting the people using them. We can get back to that love of words by re-engaging our hand at poetry, an inherent skill. Poetry may sound impractical, but it's quite the opposite. By sharpening our attention to details and to the human side of our audiences, we can bring our organizations back in line with their missions and markets. AI can neither replace nor do without good content, and professional communicators who can call

on their inner poets are the only source of good content. We can provide the touchstones that AI is utterly lost without. We're going to explore why you should bring your inner poet out of hiding, because in the age of the smart machine it's your secret weapon, and the one thing AI will never eclipse. In a very practical way, the return to the basics of communication that poetry encourages is how we'll see truth rebuilt and made to be a stronger player in the digital landscape.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

That AI is not something to be feared, but harnessed, and this can be done by improving our attention to and use of detail as we observe and connect with our humanity through the expression of an ancient and inherent force, the art of poetry.

Speeding Through Compliance: How AI Helps Content Keep Pace with Change!
Harpreet Shergill, Director, GRC Content and Shai Chaudhary, Manager, OneTrust

In the rapidly evolving world of Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC), staying ahead of regulatory changes—and ensuring your content keeps up—can feel like chasing a speeding train. What if your compliance content could meet the latest standards while evolving at the speed of change? In this session, we'll show how strategic planning and AI can help you create efficient, adaptable compliance content to keep up with shifting regulations.

Harpreet will break down GRC content—from controls to compliance to managing evolving regulations—showing how a repeatable structure turns challenges into scalable solutions. Then, Shai will demonstrate how AI can streamline content creation, ensuring speed, efficiency, and accuracy.

Whether you're just starting or optimizing workflows, you'll leave with practical tools and AI insights to keep your content current, precise, and ready for what's next.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Understand the structure of GRC content and how it evolves from regulatory controls to compliance—and how a repeatable structure makes compliance management easier and less daunting.
- Discover how AI can boost efficiency and adaptability in content creation, ensuring

compliance content evolves as quickly as regulations do.
- Walk away with a list of AI tools and engines you can explore to enhance your content development processes.
- Understand how to evaluate the effectiveness of your AI-enhanced compliance content, focusing on accuracy, efficiency, and adaptability in the face of regulatory change.
- Gain real-world insights on how to strategically integrate AI into your content planning to streamline workflows and improve compliance accuracy.

D(ocs) & D(evelopment): Finding the Perfect Party for Your Documentation Campaign

Kim Nylander, Principal Technical Writer, and Hedley Simons, Sr. Principal Field Engineer, Grafana Labss

It's product release time. The code is stable. You've got everything EXCEPT the docs.

How do you create meaningful, prioritized content quickly?

Your writer needs to collaborate with a Subject Matter Expert (SME) who understands the technical and user contexts.

At Grafana, this synergy often happens between Field Engineers (FE) and Technical Writers (TW). FEs are a three-in-one SME with the understanding of a developer, sales engineer, and technical support.

How does this collaboration benefit both writers and SMEs?
- TW has a single SME for user needs and cross-product technical expertise.
- FEs get accurate, up-to-date content that help them and Grafana's customers learn products.

Product users get accurate, up-to-date docs.

We'll share how this collaboration started through a love of RPGs, the traps we encountered and lessons learnt, and how a bi-weekly session between two colleagues became the foundation for a model now used across Grafana's telemetry products.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:
- How to Identify and recruit collaborators best suited to work on documentation
- How to guide documentation contributors on what level of documentation is useful for their software, product, feature, etc.
- Tips for establishing a collaborative workflow with regular cadence
- How to prioritize work that best addresses the user's needs
- Why you need relentless curiosity, to be willing to ask questions no one else does

4:45–5:05	The Curators of Truth: Elevating Knowledge in the Age of AI

Jason Kaufman, CEO, Zaon Labs

As AI-generated content grows more fluent and abundant, knowledge professionals face a defining choice: remain passive content producers or rise as Truth Curators—validators, verifiers, and stewards of enterprise clarity. This session challenges the idea that structured content is always accurate, showing how AI can confidently produce misinformation. Attendees will explore the shift from content creation to content governance, and learn how to combat knowledge drift through Truth Curation™. With practical examples and mindset shifts, this talk empowers content leaders to ensure knowledge remains trusted, current, and aligned with reality in an AI-driven world.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:
- Why AI-generated content can appear credible while being factually wrong—and how that impacts enterprise knowledge
- The concept of Truth Curation and how it reframes the role of technical writers from content creators to strategic validators
- How to recognize and combat Knowledge Drift in AI-powered content workflows

- Practical strategies for implementing Human Verified™ practices within content governance models
- How to position content teams as essential stewards of trust, clarity, and decision-making in an AI-driven organization
- Real-world scenarios where unchecked AI content led to misinformation—and how curated truth could have changed the outcome

---

5:05–5:25   **TBA**

5:25–5:45   **No One Left Behind: The Business Case for Inclusivity and Inclusive Content**

Dipo Ajose-Coker, Senior Marketing Manager, RWS

You wouldn't intentionally create content that alienates entire groups of people, right? But here's the hard truth: if inclusivity isn't built into your content strategy, you probably are.

From language that excludes non-native speakers to designs that ignore accessibility needs, companies make avoidable mistakes every day. And in today's world, exclusion isn't just bad ethics—it's bad business.

In No One Left Behind, we'll show why inclusive content isn't just a "nice-to-have", it's a business differentiator that builds brand trust, expands audience reach, and (let's be honest) helps you avoid PR disasters. It'll also keep you off certain radars…

You'll leave with practical, immediately useful ways to make content more inclusive—without adding extra time, cost, or complexity to your process.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Are You Accidentally Excluding People?—How to spot bias, inaccessible language, and design barriers in your content.
- Fix It Before It's a Headline—Why inclusive content isn't just about ethics—it's about risk management and reputation.
- Small Tweaks, Big Impact—Simple changes that make your content accessible to everyone (and keep legal and feds off your back).

By the end of this session, you'll have the tools to ensure every audience feels seen, valued, and included—because if your content isn't for everyone, it's for no one.

| 6:30– | **Parade to Dinner Venues Followed by Annual Karaoke Night Sponsored by RWS** |

Wednesday, October 8

| 8:00– | **Breakfast** |

| 8:30–9:15 | **Breakout Sessions** |

Get People to Do What You Want: The Magic of Influencing Without Authority
Nicole Edens, Technical Writing Manager, and Heather Barbre Blades, Senior Technical Writer, Jack Henry and Associates

Do you ever wish you had a magic wand to get people to do what you want? While we can't promise magic, we can offer the next best thing: everyday negotiation skills! Regardless of your role, you can use the art of interpersonal negotiation to encourage others to act in desired ways for the benefit of the group. And as a bonus, these skills can transform your professional life (and your work relationships) – no authority required!

Get ready to unlock the magic of everyday negotiation to enrich your connections with colleagues and make your professional interactions smoother and more productive.

Here's what you'll learn in this session:

- Why strong interpersonal negotiation skills give you more influence than your fancy title, your formal authority, or your stunning intellect
- Why being likable and fostering emotional equity matters – and how to do both
- The difference between positional and interest-based negotiation – and how one of these is the secret to negotiating situations to make everyone happy
- Practical everyday negotiation magic tricks (skills, tips, and techniques) to persuade and influence others effectively

Legal, Compliance, and Risk, Oh My! How to Shift Your Relationship from "Oh No!" to "Oh Yeah!"
Shannon Leahy, Senior Manager Experience Design, Capital One

Lawyers. The bane of our existence. The antithesis of what we stand for and what we do as content strategists. Right?

Wrong.

"Useful and usable" and "legally sound" aren't mutually exclusive. Discover tactics and tools you can start using right now to redefine how you and your legal partners work together.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Why legal and compliance isn't a roadblock to great content or experiences
- How to shift your mindset from dreading lawyers to loving them
- Guiding principles for building—or rebuilding—a strong partnership with your legal team
- Tools, tactics, and rituals you can use to speed up content creation, revisions, and approvals

Quantifying Quality: Navigating the Challenges of Measuring Content Impact
Vishal Gupta, Content Designer, Cisco

In technical documentation, creating high-quality content is crucial for seamless product experiences. The challenge extends beyond creation—it's about effectively measuring content quality and impact. This session explores the importance of content quality and innovative evaluation tools and methodologies.

In this presentation we will share Cisco Tech Comms' journey in developing a comprehensive Content Quality Score, integrating customer

feedback and analyzing documentation defects. Discover how we addressed gaps in traditional methods with a customer listening program focused on technical content.

Learn about the value added by technical documentation using self-service and case deflection metrics. Explore the role of web analytics in prioritizing action plans to enhance content quality scores.

Join us to uncover strategies for measuring the unmeasurable, offering insights and practical takeaways for anyone involved in content creation and management within the technical domain.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- The importance of high-quality content in technical documentation and its impact on user empowerment and product experience
- Challenges in measuring content quality and the necessity of standardizing quality metrics across diverse product portfolios
- How Cisco Tech Comms developed a comprehensive Content Quality Score by integrating customer feedback and analyzing documentation defects
- Innovative tools and methodologies for evaluating content quality, including the implementation of a customer listening program focused on technical content
- The role of web analytics in prioritizing action plans to enhance content quality
- The use of self-service and case deflection metrics to demonstrate the value added by technical documentation
- Strategies for measuring the content performance, providing a holistic view that aligns with customer needs and drives meaningful results

RAGs to Riches: How Our Content Affects Retrieval Augmented Generation
Manny Silva, Head of Documentation, Skyflow

LLMs have a knowledge problem: their training data is often out of date, and the info we want to leverage often isn't included in the training data in the first place. Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) is an approach to dynamically give LLMs the information we need them to have right when we need them to have it. Want an LLM to know about your products, procedures, or users? RAG is the solution.

But how do docs affect RAG? Doc content, its formatting, and how it's processed all impact whether the LLM responds with knowledge and (reasonable) confidence or whether the response is full of hallucinations. Come learn about RAG, how technical communicators can make use of it, how our docs affect RAG performance, and what we can do to make sure our users (and our LLMs) get the content they need when they need it.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- How Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) works and why it's valuable for enhancing LLM applications
- The different kinds of RAG, what differentiates them, and when to use them
- The critical relationship between documentation quality and RAG performance
- Best practices for structuring and formatting technical content to optimize RAG retrieval
- How to help your developers improve their RAG tooling and own a part of how your content is used

Are You for Real? Fighting Fake Content and Maintaining Trust with C2PA
Demian Hess, Senior Solutions Architect, Amazon Web Services

The internet is awash in AI-generated content that spreads misinformation and disinformation, erodes public trust in institutions, and damages brands. Deloitte estimates that fraud from deepfakes will cost the financial sector alone an additional $5 billion by 2027. If you are not thinking about how to protect your content, you should start planning now. One way to combat fakes is to document content provenance using a new standard developed by the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA). The C2PA standard makes it possible to bind cryptographically-signed metadata to assets. The metadata documents the origin of the content and serves as a certificate of authenticity. Although often used with images and video, C2PA can be applied to any digital format, including text and PDFs. Reflecting the importance of the new standard, Time Magazine listed C2PA in its Best Technical Innovations of 2024.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Threat of deepfakes
- Techniques to combat deepfakes, including detection, watermarking, blockchain technologies, and content provenance documentation
- C2PA use cases and advantages of tracking content provenance

- C2PA concepts, including Manifest Stores, Manifests, Hard Bindings, Soft Bindings, Assertions, Claims, and Signatures
- Recommendations on choosing a taxonomy for C2PA metadata
- Guidance on C2PA technical implementation

9:30–10:15   Breakout Sessions

Bridging Continents: Managing Product Content Teams Across Cultures and Borders
Manoj Bokil, Senior Manager, Technical Content Strategy, Teradata India

In the globalized world of technical content, managing teams across different regions presents both opportunities and challenges. Drawing on over 19 years of experience leading technical documentation teams in both the U.S. and India, this session explores the cultural differences and leadership approaches that can influence the success of globally distributed teams. The speaker's learnings are primarily aimed at high-context cultures, where communication relies more on nuance and shared understanding. However, these insights can be fine-tuned and adapted to apply across diverse geographies, including low-context cultures, by adjusting communication styles to fit the local context.

Through real-world case studies and personal insights, attendees will gain practical strategies for overcoming cultural barriers, streamlining communication, and ensuring seamless transfer of product knowledge across geographies.

You'll leave this session with actionable tips on:

- Adapting leadership and communication styles to align with cultural expectations across continents
- Fostering effective collaboration between distributed teams
- Navigating challenges such as time zone differences, cultural barriers, and other subtler aspects
- Ensuring a successful product and content knowledge transfer process between teams in the U.S. and India
- Managing team sentiment and dynamics in the context of shifting work arrangements, whether navigating return-to-office mandates or embracing remote-first approaches

This session will help global product content leaders build cohesive, high-performing teams regardless of geographic location and help content creators work better across all their teams.

AI-Assisted Authoring: Hype vs. Reality Ensuring Consistency and Compliance
Bonnie Swanson, Technical Communications Manager, Proscia

AI promises to revolutionize content creation, but in regulated industries like digital pathology, the reality is more complex. This workshop will cut through the hype to explore how AI can assist in structured authoring without compromising consistency, compliance, or content reuse. Attendees will gain practical insights into AI-assisted workflows that support content governance rather than disrupt it.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Human Oversight is Non-Negotiable—AI-generated content in regulated industries must always undergo rigorous human review before publication.
- AI as a Consistency Enforcer, Not a Disruptor—AI can help maintain uniformity in terminology and structured authoring rather than introducing variation.
- AI in Structured Authoring Workflows—How AI can assist to reinforce structured content strategies.
- Challenges and Pitfalls—Recognizing AI limitations, including hallucination risks and regulatory constraints.
- Practical AI Experiments—Real-world examples of AI-assisted content workflows

and how attendees can experiment in their own organizations.

Future-Proofing Global Content: Governance, Scale, and SaaS Success at Broadcom
Bernard Aschwanden, Principal, AEM Guides Technologist

SESSION DESCRIPTION TO COME

You Can Tune a Piano—You Can Also Tune a Prompt
Susan Kelley, Senior Technical Content Strategist, Medidata

By now, many of us are already effective at generating prompts to create output in a variety of artificial intelligence tools. Where we are still growing our AI muscles is in prompt engineering, or "prompt tuning" to get the results we want. There are no tricks to this trade, but there are effective editing tools, just like the edits and rules of grammar we learned as early writers. Those are the rules attendees will walk away with in this session.

Anyone who has been to one of my sessions at STC knows that I am a fast-paced and fun speaker who leaves the audience energized with lots to talk about. This session is no different. While the prompt tuning field is changing rapidly, it is also developing a set of guardrails that attendees can learn as quickly as we all learned when to use a modal verb.

This session will introduce learners to a variety of prompt tuning methods and outcomes and will prepare them to add another skillset to their resumes upon completion. See you in Atlanta!

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Clear and concise ways to clean up prompts that are too broad or too specific to get desired results
- Effective ways to help models understand the situation or background relevant to initial prompts
- Sample inputs and resulting outputs from strong, effective prompts in a variety of Gen AI tools
- Zero-shot, single-shot, and multi-shot prompting and tuning for the best results, and what those terms mean

- Tailoring prompts to suit specific domains, then re-tuning the same prompts for cleaner results
- Excellent ways to work with leadership on trust-building, ethical considerations, and building your role as a prompt engineer and tech writing team thought leader

Do You Need a CCMS to Deliver Enterprise Content With Quality and Velocity?
Nick Green, Software Manager, Doc Publishing, and Edward Porter, Sr Developer and Tech Lead, SAS Institute

At SAS, a team of globally distributed content creators use a custom Docs-like-Code publishing system to manage the documentation for around 250 software products. The system delivers around 1000 English "docsets" in multiple formats monthly—100s of which are translated into 20+ languages.

Unlike a traditional CCMS, the SAS CI/CD publishing system leverages GitHub and CVS for versioning and maintaining structured XML and other source files, while still affording content creators extensive modularity and enabling reuse.

Organically evolving for the past twenty years, SAS documentation infrastructure represents an alternative to the typical DITA-based CCMS solution. This case study explores the features, feasibility, strengths, and weaknesses of a content management strategy built on software development CI/CD tooling and practices. Does leveraging open-source software development tooling to build and maintain documentation stack up against the CCMS? Is it right for you?

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Maybe you don't need a CCMS. There is an alternative to the component content management system that could be leveraged for an agile, low-cost content management strategy.
- Your content could be "code." Software engineers have built robust systems for high-velocity development. Those tools could be your pathway to lightning-fast content delivery.
- Nothing comes for free. Rolling your own content publishing pipeline is flexible and can reach enterprise-scale, but there are tradeoffs.

10:30–11:15   **Reserved to Repeat Standing Room Only Sessions**

Content Effectiveness: Measuring What Matters
Hilary Marsh, President and Chief Strategist, Content Company, Inc.

All too often, we measure content effectiveness using the data that's easiest to gather: page views via Google Analytics, conversion statistics, or revenue. But in reality, as sociologist William Bruce Cameron wrote, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." Creating effective content is about setting smart, measurable goals for content, learning whether or how well content achieved its goal, and taking this information into account for future content. This session will cover practical examples and guides for making your organization's content more effective.

Here's what you'll learn from this session:

- Identifying what content success looks like
- How to actually do the measurement to determine whether content is successful
- Understanding and overcoming roadblocks to content success

11:30–11:50   **Conference Recap**

Jack Molisani, The LavaCon Conference, and Joe Gollner, Gnostyx

11:50–12:30   **Closing Panel Discussion: The Future of Content**

Jack Molisani, The LavaCon Conference (Moderator)

1:30–4:30   **Post-Conference Workshop**

Train Generative AI Bots to Rock Your Docs (How I Learned to Stop Falling Behind and Love the Bot)
Melanie Davis, President & CEO, Dragonfly Diva Docs LLC

"How will I ever find enough to keep these hordes of writers occupied?" asked no Technical Documentation Manager ever.

"How am I supposed to do more with less, and keep doing it well (enough)?!" is our familiar refrain.

It's certainly not a new question, but there are definitely some new answers! Like the advent of word processors and Desktop Publishing in the 80s, HTML-based help authoring tools and DITA/XML structured authoring in the 90s, cell phones and social media platforms in the 00s, and responsive design and headless CMS in the 10s, we're leaning into Artificial Intelligence to work smarter rather than harder in the 20s.

Here's what you'll learn from this workshop:

Nope, we won't talk about how to use generative AI to write more efficiently or elegantly. Instead, we'll look at how to augment existing technical writing LLMs with data models for specific niche writing tasks that are time-consuming but low-return. With pertinent prompts, you'll be able to hand over mundane writing tasks to new team members–Earl Error Messages, Aaron API References, and Rhonda Release Notes–and free up your few real writers to focus on the expertise machines can't emulate.

Speakers

Scott Abel

Scott Abel is Content Strategy Evangelist at Heretto and runs The Content Wrangler, a consultancy that helps companies improve technical product content creation and delivery. He writes for content industry publications, produces content strategy books for XML Press, and speaks at industry events worldwide.

Dipo Ajose-Coker

With an MA in Multilingual and Multimedia Document Conception from Université Paris Cité, Dipo Ajose-Coker has dedicated 19 years to technical communication roles in the Fintech and MedTech industries, including DITA migration expertise and technical communication.

In 2021, he pivoted to Content Creation and Marketing, serving as an essential intermediary between software developers and end-users to align expectations with deliverables.

As a Product Marketing Manager, in the world of Technical Communications, Dipo continues to advocate for best practice by all stakeholders in the content management, translation and delivery workspaces, orchestrating a harmonious dialogue between users, industry experts, and vendors.

Bernard Aschwanden

BIO TO COME

Gavin Austin

Gavin Austin is a writer, speaker, and content strategist who's helped grow Salesforce's content experience team from 3 to 500+ writers. With more than 20 years in the technical communications field, he's shared the lessons and technologies he's learned at a variety of conferences, including Dreamforce, ContentTECH, Intelligent Content Conference, Information Development World, Agile2013, WritersUA, LavaCon, Confab, Button, and more.

Heather Barbre Blades

Heather Barbre Blades has a diverse career background, encompassing extensive work as a technical writer and conflict professional. After spending over a decade at Missouri State University focusing on communication and conflict management, she is now a Senior Technical Writer at Jack Henry and the co-founder of Communication and Conflict Management Associates.

Heather's expertise in fostering collaborative cultures, her passion for research, and her dedication to building meaningful connections have been invaluable at Jack Henry. She has played a vital role in facilitating, expanding, and evaluating engagement efforts for her team of over 30 technical writers and her larger department of 140 associates. Heather is also an experienced trainer, facilitator, mediator, and conflict coach. Her passion for helping others develop communication skills and manage challenging interactions shines through, whether she is presenting to a group of 300 or supporting an individual colleague.

Melinda Belcher

From brand strategy to sales enablement to product design, Melinda has spent over two decades honing her problem-solving skills in nonprofit, agency and enterprise environments. Throughout her career journey, she has had the privilege of designing physical and digital experiences for esteemed organizations such as Salesforce, John Deere, IBM, AT&T, Microsoft, and the Girl Scouts.

Currently, Melinda brings her expertise as an Head of Experience Design at JPMorgan Chase in New York City, where she leads a team of design, content and research experts, focused on driving innovative solutions to customer problems. "I take pride in fostering strong connections with product, tech, data and legal partners. I enjoy finding new ways to streamline processes and helping teams work better together."

Manoj Bokil

With over 25 years of progressive experience in technical communication, Manoj Bokil is a Senior Manager leading the Teradata India team for Technical Content Strategy and Design. Throughout his career, he has worked with industry giants such as Oracle, Symantec, and Persistent, helping teams shape impactful content strategies and solutions. An active contributor to the technical communication community, Manoj Bokil has been a long-standing participant and speaker at various STC India events and conferences for over two decades. Beyond his professional expertise, he is passionate about social causes, championing animal rights and a strong ally for the LGBTQ+ community.

Anita Booth

Anita Booth is a brand visionary, creative strategist, and venture igniter with a passion for helping businesses craft powerful identities that resonate across industries. With a wealth of experience in leadership roles in a variety of industries, including her current position as Vice President of Marketing & Communications at Women in Payments, Anita brings cutting-edge knowledge and innovation to her work, helping businesses and entrepreneurs stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. As the co-host of the JUMPin2it Entrepreneurs podcast and co-author of the JUMPin2it Breakthru Marketing Guide, Anita delivers fresh ideas and practical strategies to audiences. Her engaging presentations at local chambers of commerce, corporate events, and client workshops inspire participants to think differently, push creative boundaries, and build brands that stand out in today's crowded marketplace.

Patrick Bosek

Patrick is a believer and thought-leader in Content Operations and structured content. His purpose is to advance the content and information development industry with new technology, thinking, and approaches that improve our experiences with the organizations we work with and for. At Heretto, he is a co-founder and CEO. He and his team work on a wide range of projects all focused on improving authoring, production, and distribution of content.

Brock Brown

Brock A. Brown, M.S., serves as a Program Manager on LinkedIn's Learning and Training team, where he helps uphold the platform's trust and safety standards. He also contributes his expertise as a board member of the Nebraska Association of Talent Development. Brock earned dual B.S. degrees in Business Administration and Business Information Systems from Southwestern College in Winfield, KS, and holds a Master of Information Systems with a concentration in Knowledge and Learning Management from Friends University in Wichita, KS. Brock is a sought-after speaker at conferences nationwide. With over 20 years of experience in learning management systems, content management systems, and knowledge management systems, he is recognized as a highly efficient, goal-oriented leader skilled in fostering productive business relationships. In his free time, he dedicates himself to non-profit and community initiatives focused on addressing the needs of homeless and underserved populations.

Lee Bryars

Lee Bryars has over 20 years of experience working with content as a back-end designer, engineer, and advocate for content management and metadata best practices in various sectors including electronic publishing, libraries, federal government, and finance. She recently joined Fidelity as a back-end UX content strategist for associate-facing content in the Workplace Investing space.

Gina Cairney

Gina Cairney is a content designer, strategist, and writer with over a decade of experience making people click on things. Gina is a lead content designer at Cvent, leading initiatives that help build the UX content design team. When They aren't writing, you can find them reading, painting, or walking around NYC with a little camera.

Leslie Carruthers

Leslie Carruthers is the founder and president of The Search Guru, a digital marketing agency helping B2B enterprises drive measurable growth. With over 25 years of experience, she is a recognized expert in AI-driven marketing, SEO, and conversion optimization. A graduate of Ohio University's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Leslie has trained, consulted for, and executed strategies for startups to Fortune 500 companies.

A sought-after speaker, she has presented at Content Marketing World, MAICON, SMX, eTail, and the Direct Marketing Association, delivering actionable insights on AI in marketing, search evolution, and data-driven decision-making. Named a Top 50 Content Marketing Influencer (2018) and one of the Top Women in SEO (2012), Leslie blends technical expertise with strategic vision. Her agency specializes in navigating complex sales cycles, leveraging AI to drive leads and revenue while maximizing ROI in an evolving digital landscape.

Shai Chaudhary

Shai Chaudhary is a Manager on the GRC Content Team at OneTrust, where she leads the creation of InfoSec, risk, compliance, and privacy content. Her team simplifies complex standards and regulations into actionable frameworks that help customers streamline their compliance programs. Before OneTrust, Shai worked in cybersecurity, specializing in information security consulting and research. She also contributed to PwC's Audit and Data Analytics practices, delivering audit engagements across diverse industries. As a well-rounded compliance professional, Shai holds certifications across information security, privacy, and AI, including ISO 27001 and ISO 42001 Lead Auditor, CIPM, CIPP/C, and AIGP. Outside of the compliance world, Shai is an avid sports fan—whether it's basketball, F1 racing, or hockey, she's always tuned in. When she's not watching her favorite teams, you'll find her staying on top of her own fitness game, either lifting weights or perfecting her Pilates moves!

Jeff Coyle

Jeff is an AI content marketing expert with more than 25 years' experience in the search industry. Before founding MarketMuse in 2015, he was a marketing consultant in Atlanta and led the Traffic, Search and Engagement team for seven years at TechTarget, a leader in B2B technology publishing and lead generation. Jeff frequently speaks at content marketing conferences including: ContentTECH, Marketing AI Conference, Content Marketing World, Content Marketing Conference and more. He earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Jeff also co-founded beer brewery in Brunswick, Georgia that has won World Beer Cup, Great American Beer Festival, and US Open Medals.

Melanie Davis

"I get things done in half the time with twice the fun!"

Passion drives what Melanie Davis does. Even after years of experience designing, developing, implementing, and leading content strategy and operations projects for multinational enterprises, governmental agencies, startups, and individuals, She is still wildly curious about new technology. There's always a way to do things better, faster, smarter.

Melanie earned a reputation for building global teams that deliver beyond their capacity, deepen their professional mastery, and thrive in an environment of high expectations and tight deadlines.

AI is now an essential tool in the documentation technology stack. Melanie is reveling in the opportunity to learn how to guide AI to apply her deep technical expertise and help further hone her craft. With a degree in journalism and a long career in technical documentation, Melanie finds refining AI prompts to obtain the desired information or perform a task as comfortable as consulting a thesaurus. "I'm here for it!"

Viqui Dill

Viqui Dill has been a practicing technical communicator for 27 years. Her projects ensure excellent field execution so that clients perform their jobs smoothly without having to worry about the tools and systems they use.

Viqui is enthusiastic about personal and community connection. She speaks at professional conferences and personal events. She maintains a good relationship with educators and provides short-term mentoring to students and new hires. She is an unashamed advocate for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in every area of her life.

Active in her local community, Viqui serves as Worship Arts Pastor for her church, the exchange. She organized the Winchester Pride Worship celebration.

Viqui describes herself as "Technical writer, wife and mom, bass player, worship leader, I'm happiest when folks sing along with me."

Andrew Douglas

Andrew Douglas is currently working with Bluestream with their leading CCMS solution: scalable, cost effective and incredible IPC (Illustrated Parts Catalog) functionality for manufacturing clients.

Also launching and promoting the XDelivery Documentation Portal – a revolutionary, cost effective portal solution that allows for structure to be injected into PDF and HTML, supports multiple content formats and is delivered within a few weeks!

He has worked with many organizations in developing new markets and key accounts where he simplified complex technical problems into understandable business aims.

With over 12 years in Enterprise content operations projects, Andrew provides his clients with a resource that can rapidly identify the optimal solution with clearly defined business benefits.

Charles Dowdell

Charles has 25+ years experience managing technical communications teams and processes. He has significant global experience in multinational corporations in several different industries. He is an experienced conference presenter and enjoys a good laugh coupled with professionalism in Tech Comms and Information Science. His career started as a global field service engineer. He is an alumnus of Syracuse University iSchool and has worked on all 7 continents.

Nicole Edens

Nicole Edens is a seasoned Technical Writing Manager at Jack Henry and Associates, boasting nearly 20 years of experience. She leads a dedicated team of 11 technical writers and has mentored dozens of apprentices, all of whom can attest to her passion for fostering collaboration, transparency, and trust. Nicole excels in leading diverse documentation teams and is affectionately known as a "mama bear" for her caring leadership style and her ability to handle conflicts and difficult conversations with skill and empathy. In addition to her formal leadership role, Nicole plays a pivotal part in promoting engagement and fostering connections within her larger department, which includes 140 instructional designers, live trainers, and technical writing associates. Her efforts continue to help create a cohesive and connected remote work environment for her colleagues.

Jim Edmunds

BIO TO COME

Nathan Eggen

BIO TO COME

Lief Erickson

Lief is co-founder of Intuitive Stack, a content strategy consultancy for businesses with outdated technical documentation practices. He holds a master's degree in Content Strategy from FH Joanneum (Austria), where he also teaches information architecture. With expertise in taxonomies, search optimization, and ContentOps, Lief has held roles as a technical writer and information architect. At Intuitive Stack, he helps organizations modernize their content strategy so they can focus on their next innovation.

Leslie Farinella

Leslie Farinella joined as President of Content Rules in Oct 2024.

With a background in engineering, software development, process optimization, content strategy, and instructional design, Leslie has spent the last 25 years solving complex business problems within Fortune 1000 companies – first working as a consultant and then delivering technical solutions while serving as Chief Strategy Officer at Xyleme, a leading CCMS for Learning.

Leslie believes that value generation is about mastering the ability to identify the crux of the problem through a deep understanding of the user experience, devising a feasible path forward, and then executing that plan with laser precision using a mix of business processes, change management, and technology.

When she's not solving problems, you can find Leslie outside – reading, gardening, or walking on the beach.

Sara Feldman

Sara is the Director of Member Engagement at the Consortium for Service Innovation, a nonprofit think tank dedicated to improving customer engagement. She frequently explores Cross-Functional Customer Experience through her conference presentations and LinkedIn newsletter.

With a deep curiosity about all things content, Sara has built her career around effective communication—spanning technical writing, knowledge management, customer success enablement, and product management liaison roles. She has collaborated with nearly every type of team in SaaS environments, always seeking ways to bridge gaps and enhance customer experience. When not thinking about content strategy, Sara is attempting to improve her success rate with keeping houseplants alive while working from home in Las Vegas.

Megan Gilhooly

As a Certified Information Privacy Manager (CIPM) and Sr. Director of GRC Content for OneTrust, Megan Gilhooly drives content strategy and operations for GRC and Privacy content in the OneTrust platform. Previously, she launched a new self-help & content experience at Reltio, covering technical product content and user experience – including AI – for a data platform that unifies data across enterprise systems. Before that, as VP Customer Experience at Zoomin Software – a content delivery platform – Megan made it her mission to change how organizations think about product content. She spent two decades managing content teams, driving content strategy, and delivering stellar information experiences at companies like Amazon, Ping Identity, and INVIDI Technologies. She has a BA in Speech Communication, an MS in Journalism, an MS in Strategic Management, and a Masters Certificate in Technical Communication.

Joe Gollner

Joe is the Managing Director of Gnostyx Research Inc. (http://www.gnostyx.com) where he specializes in providing objective and research-based guidance on the development, management, and strategic use of content technologies. In this field, he is a veteran implementer with over 30 years of experience, and he is well-known for mixing leading-edge ideas (and all too frequently concocting them) with highly pragmatic implementation tactics. He has Masters degrees from both the University of Oxford (Literature) and McGill University (Management), blogs about Content and Management (gollner.ca), is working on a book about "Engineering Content", and is pursuing doctoral research into the role of AI-enabled text analytics in the management of organizations.

Nick Green

Twenty-five years ago, armed with a computer science degree, Nick applied for a developer position at SAS. He was surprised when SAS invited him to interview—not for a traditional development role, but for one in the Technical Publishing department. At the time, he knew little about technical documentation but recognized SAS as a great software company to work for and eagerly accepted the opportunity.

Today, Nick leads the Tech-Pub Engineering Team, which develops and maintains the tools that power SAS product documentation. His team built the structured XML publishing system that has been the backbone of SAS documentation for over two decades. Designed by software developers to treat documentation like code, this system has continually evolved —most recently integrating GitHub repos for storage in 2024.

Eeshita Grover

As the Senior Director Content Design and Strategy at Cisco, Eeshita leads the end user content experience and deliverables for Cisco Technical Communications. She has over 20 years of experience in content creation, management, and strategy, with a passion for leveraging the power of content to market, sell, communicate, and persuade the audience.

Vishal Gupta

Vishal is a Content Designer with the Cisco Tech Comms team, where he leads the Customer Listening, Analytics, and Content Quality programs. With over 19 years of experience in content strategy, financial analysis, and value management, he brings a wealth of expertise to his role.

Previously, Vishal worked in Value Analysis and Investment Banking roles, where he honed the art of building compelling and credible business cases through innovative financial analysis.

Holding a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science & Engineering and a Master's degree in Business Administration in Finance, Vishal's educational background and professional experience have equipped him with a unique skill set that helps him excel in his current role.

Gabrielle Hailmann

Gabrielle Hailmann, founder and CEO of 360 Integral Marketing, is a cutting-edge marketing strategist and data-driven problem solver who specializes in leveraging technology to build powerful sales funnels and grow businesses. With a focus on aligning marketing efforts with measurable outcomes, with an extensive background working for large fortune 500 brands, Gabrielle helps clients harness tools like AI, analytics, and automation to create campaigns that drive leads, conversions, and long-term growth.

As the co-host of the JUMPin2it Entrepreneurs podcast and co-author of the JUMPin2it Breakthru Marketing Guide, Gabrielle is known for breaking down complex marketing concepts into actionable insights. She has spoken at local chambers of commerce, corporate workshops, and client events, sharing her expertise in building scalable systems that transform marketing from a cost center into a growth engine.

Rob Hanna

Rob Hanna has dedicated his professional life to improving outcomes for teams embarking on structured authoring projects. Over the past 30 years, he has worked with many large corporations on DITA and CCMS projects to bring their teams into structure and drive operational efficiencies. He has taught metadata and taxonomies at the University of Toronto and private courses on structured authoring, DITA, and information architecture. In 2013, Rob founded Precision Content in Toronto, Canada, to build a team of writers, developers, and IAs to continue his mission to raise the bar in Technical Communication.

Carol Hattrup

Carol has always worked in the intersection of technical documentation, quality assurance, and instructional design. She celebrated her first poetry publication in a national journal many years ago at the same time she was converting docs to DITA. This sudden confluence woke her to the realization that poetry and tech comm have a surprising number of techniques in common, and that skills in each always improve performance in the other. Since then, she's had poems published in Boston Accent Lit, California Quarterly, Hawaii Pacific Review, The MacGuffin, Midwest Quarterly, The New York Quarterly, Pudding Magazine, South Dakota Review, The Virginia Normal, and dozens of others. Her essays have appeared in The International Journal of Ethics and Information Technology, in The Journal of Philosophy in the Contemporary World, and in an anthology by Potomac Press. She's now teaching poetry workshops around the world to help others experience a new way to grow as communicators and connectors.

Joy Herbers

Joy Herbers is an experienced content strategist specializing in content operations, design, and knowledge management, with decades of experience across print, digital, and web publishing, particularly in the energy and technology sectors. Joy worked as the content strategist for portfolio and product strategy at E Source, a consultancy in the energy and utilities industry, where she led enterprise-wide content strategy initiatives and contributed to research and editorial projects, including co-authoring the E Source style guide and reports on content strategy for utilities. Her previous roles include senior editorial positions at AECOM and Leopard (an Ogilvy agency), and B2B copywriting for clients like IBM, SAP, and Cisco. Joy holds a BA in English with a minor in French from UC Davis and is based in Louisville, Colorado. Her professional portfolio is available at joyherbers.com, showcasing her writing, editing, and design work.

Demian Hess

Demian Hess is a Sr Partner Solutions Architect at AWS, focusing on Digital Publishing. With over 18 years of experience in the publishing industry, Demian has written extensively on Digital Asset Management, Content Management, and flexible metadata models using NoSQL and Semantic Web technologies.

Marjorie Hlava

Marjorie M.K. Hlava, wrote 5 books in information science, three on taxonomies y creation. Currently the Convener of the ISO 25964 Information-and-documentation Part 1: Thesauri-for-information-retrieval, management, and use. She has served on the development teams for the Z39.19 2005 Controlled Vocabulary, the Z39.85 Dublin-Core standards. Created taxonomies for CrEdit standard, Z39.104 Standards -Specific-Ontology-for-Standards (SSOS), the DOI-Syntax and DOI-Contributed-Metadata-Set, Open-URL-Standard-Advisor, NISO Z39.88. Currently on ISO-Working-Group-AI-implementations-and-standards-development group for ISO TC 46 / SC9.

Known to most as Margie Hlava, is Chief Science Officer, Chairman, and Founder of Access Innovations, Inc. She has published more than two hundred articles and five books on information science topics. She holds two patents with 21 claims addressing automation of information processing and tagging. If you want to know about taxonomies, Ask Margie

Julie Hochheiser Ilkovich

Julie Hochheiser Ilkovich is an award-winning content marketing expert and entrepreneur. She is co-founder and managing partner of Masthead, a full-service content marketing agency. She is also a career expert and the host and executive producer of the WomenHeard podcast. Julie's passion for supporting and elevating women led her to become the co-founder and executive director of the Women in Content Marketing Association. Julie is a proud recipient of a New York Women in Communications WiCi Award, which celebrates the career achievements of rising stars in communications.

Caryn Horowitz

Caryn Horowitz has spent 15+ years working at the intersection of content, product, and user experience to create best-in-class self-service experiences at scale. Currently the Senior Manager of Enterprise Content Strategy at LinkedIn, Caryn leads a global team responsible for multi-channel content resources for LinkedIn's B2B product suites. The team has invested in LLM construction, validation, and optimization across AI-powered experiences like chat assistants and agentic guides. Prior to LinkedIn, Caryn worked at media startups and in a variety of roles at Google.

Lucie Hyde

Lucie Hyde (she/her) is a global content leader who has held strategic and senior leadership roles at some of the world's leading technology brands—including Amazon, eBay and PayPal—during periods of historic growth. Her extensive industry experience spans e-commerce, financial services, e-government and news journalism, where she has held senior leadership, strategic and operational roles.

She has deep expertise in content strategy and management, user experience and design, and commercial content and channel management. As a Senior Director in the Experience Design team at PayPal, she is currently driving AI transformation as well as running the experience architecture portfolio for the merchant design team. She lives in Northern California with her husband, son and dog.

Pranami Jhawar

Pranami Jhawar comes from a humble background where dreams were big, but resources were limited. Her passion for higher education led her to aspire for a Master's degree in the United States. Pranami's parents, unwavering in their support, put their house as collateral to make her dream a reality. Juggling on-campus jobs and rigorous studies in those initial years was challenging, but her relentless drive kept me moving forward.

Fast forward 10 years, she now has over a decade of experience in the software engineering space and currently work as a Senior Software Engineer at Microsoft in the Azure Core AI division, where she continues to push the boundaries of technology.

Pranami is also deeply committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within the tech industry. As an advocate for women in technology, she strives to inspire and support women to pursue careers in STEM fields. She believes that diverse perspectives drive innovation, and is dedicated to creating opportunities for women to excel in the tech community.

Sarah Johnson

Sarah Johnson is the founder and director of Content-first Design, as well as the author of Content-first Design, published by XML Press. With 20+ years of experience, she has helped leading brands craft user-centered content strategies that drive engagement and business results. She's worked for companies such as Stash, CVS, TIAA, Fidelity, and others, and teaches at the Bentley University User Design Center. Learn more at contentfirstdesign.com.

Colleen Jones

A content expert and Star Wars fan, Colleen Jones is the founder of Content Science, an award- winning firm where she has advised or trained hundreds of the world's leading organizations to become content Jedis.

Colleen also served as the fractional head of content at Mailchimp during its high-growth period before its $12 billion acquisition by Intuit.

As the author of The Content Advantage (third edition) and a top instructor on LinkedIn Learning, Colleen's courses and books have reached hundreds of thousands of professionals around the world. Her firm regularly conducts independent research on topics such as AI adoption, digital transformation, content operations, and content effectiveness.

Nick Kakanis

Nick Kakanis is a content designer and strategist at Pilot Company in Knoxville, Tennessee. An English literature graduate from the University of Tennessee, Nick's career has been anything but predictable. After a decade-long stint in sales and marketing within the recycling industry, he found himself drawn back to writing, making the leap into content design in 2021.

Equipped with expertise in generative AI, content management systems, and strategic storytelling, Nick thrives on building efficient, scalable content systems. His ability to blend creativity with structure has been instrumental in shaping content practices at Pilot.

Outside of work, Nick juggles life with his wife, two wonderful daughters, and a long list of hobbies (most of which, admittedly, remain on the back burner). When he's not chasing after the kids, he's coaching boxing—because punching a heavy bag is the perfect antidote to life's chaos.

Jason Kaufman

Jason Kaufman is a 20+ year veteran of knowledge management, content strategy, and enterprise AI integration. As CEO of Zaon Labs and President of Irrevo, Jason has helped Fortune 500s and global enterprises transform their content operations into scalable, AI-augmented ecosystems of trusted knowledge. A longtime advocate for ethical, effective AI adoption, Jason is the architect behind Truth Curation™—a new approach to enterprise knowledge that empowers content professionals to move beyond static documentation and become curators of clarity in an AI-driven world. Jason's career spans leadership roles at Disney, Expedia, T-Mobile, and SafeHarbor, where he led groundbreaking initiatives in knowledge architecture, content automation, and customer experience transformation. His work bridges the gap between generative AI's promise and real-world knowledge governance—with a focus on insight integrity, knowledge drift prevention, and Human Verified™ oversight.

Susan Kelley

Susan Kelley is a Senior Technical Content Strategist for Medidata AI, a clinical trials data analytics company. Before coming to Medidata Susan was an Information Architect at Broadcom and a professor at Carnegie Mellon University where she taught Rhetoric and Human-Computer Interaction. Her research and teaching focus is in business communication, specifically how women communicate and how to negotiate successfully in the technical community. She writes a frequent column on Substack called "The Pursuit" where she analyzes current events, and is frequently published in a variety of literary and popular journals. She was recently featured in the Yale University Medical journal, "The Perch" where she wrote about misconceptions about addiction and recovery and its impacts on decision making. Susan has a forthcoming book titled "Talk Like a Girl: Fierce and Feminine Language in the Workplace." She currently lives near Annapolis with her husband and two dogs, Atticus and Mack..

Hannah Kirk

Hannah Kirk, "The Pink-haired Content Strategist," is a content strategy expert helping businesses deliver exceptional digital content experiences. She has built a career transforming content infrastructure for startups. With deep expertise in technical writing and content management, Hannah specializes in implementing advanced tools like DITA, Docbook, and Markdown, optimizing content across multiple platforms and use cases.

Hannah has driven product development, launched a UX Content Design practice, and advocates for diversity and accessibility in tech. She actively mentors technical writers and content strategists, helping them develop robust documentation and design practices. Hannah continues to share her industry insights through her Medium publication, Content Strategy Adventures, establishing herself as a thought leader in content strategy and design.

Jyothi Krishnamurthi

With over 20 years of experience spanning Software QA, Business Operations, Sales Analytics, Product Management, and Knowledge Management, Jyothi Krishnamurthi has built a career at the intersection of technology, data and customer experience. Currently, as the Senior Manager of Knowledge Engineering & Delivery, Jyothi Krishnamurthi leads a global team of Knowledge Engineers, Information Architect and Program managers responsible for the content technology ecosystem, including CMS, authoring tools, and integrations with internal services to enable omni-channel content delivery. The team's work powers self-serve help experiences at scale for both LinkedIn's billion members and B2B customers, ensuring that content is accessible, structured and optimized for AI-driven discovery and delivery. Prior to LinkedIn, Jyothi held diverse positions at NetApp, Cisco, and Oracle.

Richard Kung

Richard Kung, a Senior Manager in Ciena Product Content Development, has over 30 years of experience in developing customer-centric solutions and content strategies that prioritize user experience and scalability. Recognized for his outstanding contributions, Richard was a recipient of the LavaCon Content Impact Award in both 2023 and 2024. With an unwavering commitment to innovation, he consistently seeks opportunities to enhance processes and develop scalable solutions that make a lasting impact. Richard has been actively spearheading the adoption of Generative AI at Ciena and continues to explore ways to leverage its capabilities and applications within content development.

Fabrice Lacroix

Fabrice Lacroix is a serial entrepreneur and a web pioneer. He has been working for 25 years on the development of innovative solutions around search technology, content enrichment and AI. He is the founder of Fluid Topics, the leading Content Delivery Platform for technical documentation.

Nicole LeBlanc

Nicole LeBlanc is a Manager of Content Design at Zillow, where she oversees a team working across Buying, Renting, Growth, and Enterprise experiences for landlords and property managers. With more than a decade in content design, she's launched products used by millions, reduced error rates to near-zero, and even landed a utility design patent. Before Zillow, she tackled content challenges at Meta, Lyft, Wealthfront, and State Farm—helping users navigate everything from digital ads to financial automation to roadside assistance.

Nicole thrives at the crossroads of structure and creativity, always looking for smarter ways to scale great content. When she's not deep in strategy, she's wrangling her inbox, fine-tuning the art of delegation, or contemplating whether she's slowly turning into a human CMS. (The answer is yes.)

Shannon Leahy

Shannon has worked at the intersection of words, strategy, design, and people for more than15 years. Currently, she is a senior design manager at Capital One. In past roles, she's worked as a web copywriter, an SEO specialist, an instructional designer, and a UX content strategist.

Shannon calls Richmond, Virginia home, and organizes meetups for the local content community. When she's not exclaiming about error messages, you can find her snuggling up for movie night with her family and their two dogs. Shannon's favorite neutral is leopard print. Her superpower is asking questions...lots of questions.

Alexander Lum

Alexander Lum, Director of Product Content Development, has experienced the evolution of content authoring tools and processes in content development workflow throughout his 30+ years of experience.

Today, he specializes in many things, including end-to-end product content development and publishing. His primary focus today is improving customers' user experiences and updating authoring tools with digital transformation initiatives, including incorporating Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools into product content development workflows.

Michael Mannhardt

Michael has been with Congree Language Technologies since 2019 and is President of the Congree US-subsidiary Congree Language Technologies Inc.

Michael graduated with a degree in Business Management and has over 15 years of experience in the language technology industry. At Congree he spreads the message of content optimization the world over and supports global partners and customers. Before joining Congree in July 2019, he previously worked at Acrolinx and Across Systems.

In his spare time Michael is a passionate bass player and musician and can often be seen on stage with a number bands and music projects.

LJ Marinello

LJ Marinello is the Senior Director of Cloud Strategy & Customer Success at Microsoft. With over 24 years of experience, LJ brings a business-first mindset and a strong focus on empowering others to lead with authenticity and purpose. A passionate advocate for women in leadership, she is known for her servant leadership style, her ability to drive strategic outcomes, and her dedication to mentoring female leaders.

Outside work, LJ is a proud mother of four, loves the Jersey shore, and would very much like to be best friends with Joanna Gaines.

Dave Marotz

Dave began his career as an early adopter of XML in print industry automation. Nowadays, as a Director of Production Innovation in the healthcare industry, he leads cross-functional teams focused on enhancing the customer experience. His work is at the confluence of content strategy, content operations, user experience, and automation. He is an MBA graduate from Yale School of Management and a PMP-certified leader.

Hilary Marsh

Hilary Marsh is president and chief strategist of Content Company, a content and digital strategy consultancy. She helps content-rich organizations get better results from their content by improving their practices. Clients include Allstate, American Bar Association, American College of Cardiology, American Medical Association, Endocrine Society, Institute of Food Technologists, Intuit, and Syracuse University. Hilary has taught at Kent State University, the University of Strasbourg, and University of Applied Sciences FH Joanneum in Austria.

She also offers a public online content strategy course at firehead-training.net/course/content-strategy-overview. Hilary has been published and quoted in Content Strategy for the Web, Content Strategy at Work, and reports from Prophet/Altimeter. She is a frequent speaker at national and international conferences and meetups. She leads the content strategy community at content-strategy.com.

Cara McDonald

For Cara McDonald, content marketing is not just about selling stuff, it's about creating relationships and making a difference. Guided by the belief that small companies can make a big impact on the lives of their clients, Cara started Content Matterz because she wanted to build a business where creative minds could come together to put fun and useful stuff into the world — without all the bullshit of a typical agency. With an in-depth understanding of B2B and SaaS environments, Cara's team offers considerable value as a partner to help busy marketers find more success and less burnout in their roles.

Erica McPeek

Erica McPeek is a marketing and communications pro with a passion for breaking down barriers in mental health. Her career started by answering crisis hotlines and working the overnight shift at inpatient psychiatric units—a crash course in empathy and resilience that sparked her mission to improve mental health access and crush stigma. Armed with a Bachelor of Science in Biobehavioral Health from Penn State, Erica pairs her head with her heart to create meaningful, strategic impact in everything she does.

As the Associate Director of Branding and Communication at Transformations Care Network, Erica is the mastermind behind collaborative marketing projects, genuine communication, and mission-driven content. At heart, Erica is a molecular biology nerd who filters everything through a lens of existential and phenomenological philosophy. Problem solving is in her DNA and systems level thinking is what gets her neurons firing!

Sofiya Minnath

Sofiya is a seasoned technical writing leader with over a decade of experience in content strategy and operational excellence. As Senior Manager of Technical Writing at fabric Inc., she leads a team focused on innovation in content development, automation, and user-centric documentation.

With a background in product management and documentation leadership, Sofiya specializes in leveraging AI and analytics to enhance efficiency, improve documentation ROI, and align content strategies with business goals. She is passionate about scaling content operations, advocating for documentation as a business-critical function, and driving data-driven decision-making.

Beyond work, Sofiya is deeply committed to community building and mentorship, supporting initiatives that empower professionals, especially immigrants, in the tech industry. She actively fosters knowledge-sharing, career growth, and inclusive opportunities through leadership roles in community organizations.

Jack Molisani

Jack Molisani is the President of ProSpring Technical Staffing, an employment agency specializing in technical writers and other content professionals. He's the author of *Be the Captain of Your Career: A New Approach to Career Planning and Advancement*, which hit #5 on Amazon's Career and Resume Best Seller list. Jack also produces the LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and Technical Communication Management (lavacon.org).

Roland Muts

Roland is a Product Manager, Principal Program Manager, Project Manager, Technical and Functional Consultant, PMP/Prince2 Practitioner. He has 20+ years of experience in a combination of MarTech, Advisory Business and Technical Solutions Competencies (Advisory Consulting, Technical Design, Functional Design, Architecture, Project Management).

Pam Noreault

Pam Noreault is a Principal Information Architect at Ellucian. She has over 25 years of experience in technical communications, education, and management. She specializes in content strategy, customer engagement, content conversions, and social networking strategies. Pam has an undergraduate degree in education from The Ohio State University and a master's degree in English and Professional Writing from Wright State University. When she is not tinkering with new gadgets or taking care of her dogs, she is climbing mountains in Maine and New Hampshire.

Kim Nylander

Kim Nylander is a Principal Technical Writer for tracing and profiling telemetry products at Grafana Labs. She specializes in creating and mentoring working relationships with SMEs by making technical writing enjoyable. With over 20 years experience, she understands how to quickly assess a product and the target audience to create engaging documentation. She's an active contributor for Grafana Tempo and Grafana Pyroscope open source product documentation and has contributed to several OpenStack storage open source projects.

Bridget O'Donnell

Bridget is a Senior Content Strategist at Alibaba Group, where she collaborates with teams to implement tools that streamline content workflows and improve the user experience. She specializes in optimizing content with scalable, localized solutions that enhance efficiency.

Sarah O'Keefe

Sarah O'Keefe is the CEO of Scriptorium. Sarah founded Scriptorium in 1997 to answer a simple question: "How can we use technology to improve content and publishing?" As a content industry leader, Sarah identifies trends, assesses new technologies, and recommends best practices for their successful application. When she's not busy making the content world a better place, you can find Sarah enjoying chocolate (immensely), playing video and board games, knitting, crocheting, cooking, solving word puzzles, or watching Duke play basketball. Sarah holds a BA from Duke University and is bilingual in English and German. She lives in Durham, North Carolina.

Amanda Patterson

Dr. Amanda Patterson is an AI enthusiast and accomplished technical communicator specializing in developing technical communication strategies for the manufacturing sector. She is a Sr. Consultant at Comtech Services where she focuses on information modeling, information architecture, and GenAI instruction. Her expertise encompasses leading technical writing teams, enhancing process efficiencies, and implementing advanced software solutions.

Additionally, she plays an active role in the Center for Information-Development Management (CIDM) and Tekom, demonstrating her commitment to the field through leadership, conference contributions, and publications.

Alan Porter

Alan J. Porter is first and foremost a storyteller, with close to 40 fiction and non-fiction book publishing credits. He is the Founder and Chief Content Officer of The Content Pool, that provides storytelling-driven content services to enable brands to deliver exceptional engaging customer experiences.

He has held senior leadership roles in Content Operations, Product Marketing, and Customer Experience.

Named one of the Top 25 Content Strategy Influencers and a Digital Strategy thought leader.

Edward Porter

Edward stumbled into the world of software development for technical publishing through the back door. From production editor to Technical Lead for Doc Authoring, answering "how does it work" led him further down the technical rabbit hole into the world of structured authoring, XML, DITA, and the like. Now posing as a software developer by day, he continues to try to solve the challenges of information management and content delivery without losing his ability to speak in plain English all the while maintaining a questionably healthy cycling habit. He has presented at XML Prague and Balisage and holds a Master's in Information Management from the University of Maryland.

Alan Pringle

Alan is the COO of Scriptorium and a pillar of the content industry. Driven by a mission to connect content creators to consumers, he pinpoints technologies and process improvements so content accomplishes corporate goals. He then guides teams through company culture and change management obstacles.

Kat Reierson

With over a decade of experience as a technical writer and manager, Kat Reierson leads a team at DocuSign focused on creating user-friendly product content. Passionate about simplifying complex technical information, she champions collaboration and process improvement to enhance content quality and efficiency.

Beyond her professional role, Kat is an avid adventurer who enjoys exploring the outdoors with her Bernese Mountain dogs. She is also dedicated to giving back through volunteer work and actively supports professional organizations that have shaped her career.

Alvin Reyes

As a Customer Engagement Manager, Alvin fosters vibrant customer communities and elevates customer success stories. He integrates a product background, UX research techniques, and business architecture to engage organizations working with web and structured content. He loves discussing content challenges and successes at industry events and speaking engagements.

Alvin brings a broad background and business-focused perspective having worked or consulted on web, content management, and language technology products and services. Organizations can improve their end-to-end content supply chains by combining holistic and deep-dive views to improve processes and technology integrations.

Rebecca Rhee

Rebecca Rhee has over 20 years of experience in technical content, with expertise in content strategy, content management and operations, and content development. She has successfully led multiple teams at multiple companies through the evaluation, selection, and transition to new content management systems. Rebecca excels at bridging the gap between content creation teams and engineering teams responsible for building content technologies, helping to shape and develop new content ecosystems. Currently, she manage a team of content engineers overseeing the content technology, data, and pipelines for the Knowledge Management Solutions team at LinkedIn.

Wendy Richardson

Wendy Richardson is the visionary behind "Managing Up", a brand dedicated to empowering leaders (at all levels) with the tools, strategies, and confidence to maximize their impact. With a passion for helping individuals and organizations thrive, Wendy combines her expertise in leadership, strategic planning, and storytelling to create a brand that inspires action and drives meaningful change. Guided by her core values of confidence, empowerment, resilience, and collaboration, Wendy has built a reputation for fostering authentic connections and delivering practical solutions. With over 30 years of experience in technology, finance and content strategy, Wendy is a proud recipient of several awards, including the Urban League Salute to Excellence in Business, the STL Business Journal's Most Influential Business Women and the Harlem YMCA's Black Achievers in Business.

Caroline Roth

BIO TO COME

Jael Schultz

Jael has been working in digital strategy for over a decade, specializing in content strategy and information architecture. She's currently in-role as a Content Architect at a global financial institution. Her education is in design, which gives her a unique lens on visual problem solving, and she enjoys messy information problems, mapping concepts as visuals, and creating order from chaos.

Harpreet Shergill

Harpreet Shergill is the Director of the Content Team at OneTrust, specializing in GRC and privacy content. She leads the strategy, creation, and maintenance of curated resources, including policies, templates, compliance guidelines, and mappings across numerous frameworks and regulations. Her work simplifies complex standards to help customers navigate the evolving GRC and privacy landscape. Before joining OneTrust, Harpreet built a distinguished career in GRC and cybersecurity, with expertise in audits, assessments, and compliance frameworks across diverse industries. She holds certifications such as CISA, ISO 27001, ISO 22301, ISO 42001 Lead Auditor, PCI QSA, and CIPP/E. Harpreet is also a proud mom of two energetic boys. Outside work, she treasures family time and embraces the special moments life brings.

Manny Silva

Technical writer by day, engineer by night, and father everywhere in between, Manny wears many (figurative) hats. He is passionate about intuitive and scalable developer experiences, and likes diving into the deep end as the 0th user.

Hedley Simons

Heds Simons is a Senior Principal Field Engineer, and an SME for several Grafana Labs products, most notably for tracing and profiling telemetry. He specializes in architecture and observability pipeline discussions with both customers and community users, public workshop creation and maintenance, acting as a product power-user for Grafana's engineering teams. Heds is the maintainer of several repositories, including Intro-to-MLTP, a fully Grafana OSS-based Observability pipeline environment that is freely available to the public.

Trey Smith

Trey Smith is a technical communication and content strategy innovator. After graduating from Mercer University with a degree in Technical Communication, he joined NCR Corp as a tech writer and grew to become a thought leader in the tech comm space. Trey is an advocate for single source content strategies in enterprise level environments. He currently leads the technical content developers in Honeywell's Building Automation division and is driving the digital transformation of technical content. Outside of work Trey enjoys traveling and spending time with his wife and daughter.

Thatcher Snyder

Thatcher Snyder is a content designer and writer based in Philadelphia. Thatcher is currently a senior content designer at Cvent, leading the standardization of product copy and strengthening product writing for Cvent products.

Mary Southworth

Mary Southworth started with a passion for writing in finance and that passion evolved with the web doing UX writing, content design, and content engineering, adding people leadership along the way. She currently heads a team of 13 content strategists and conversation designers supporting Fidelity's workplace products and chatbots.

Dawn Stevens

Dawn Stevens is president and owner of Comtech Services, a full-service technical communication consulting firm specializing in content strategy, technical communication, and information management. With nearly 40 years of experience in the industry, Dawn has developed deep expertise in evaluating and implementing Component Content Management Systems (CCMS) to support structured authoring and content reuse. At Comtech, Dawn has guided dozens of organizations in assessing their content needs, defining CCMS requirements, and selecting the right tools to enhance efficiency and scalability. She has worked with companies across various industries to develop content models, metadata strategies, and workflows that maximize the benefits of structured content management. She is passionate about helping organizations make informed decisions that align their content strategy with business objectives.

Britt Stewart

Britt Stewart (she/her) is a Senior Content Designer at Netflix, specializing in content design and strategy for Netflix Tudum and Netflix House. With a career spanning entertainment, education, and tech ... she's done everything from screenwriting in Hollywood to teaching English in China and to now specializing in highly-adaptable and scalable design solutions.

At Netflix, Britt has led content design for several key initiatives, including Next on Netflix 2025, the Jake Paul X Mike Tyson fight companion experience, and mobile enforcement of account password-sharing restrictions. She approaches her role in content design as a force of clarity, cohesion, and connection to help bridge gaps in complex, multi-stakeholder environments.

An avid lifelong language learner (she speaks 5!), classic movie lover, and fierce advocate for accessibility, Britt brings a deep, humanistic storytelling lens to every product experience she crafts.

Mirhonda Studevant

Mirhonda Studevant, the self-proclaimed KM Chef, enjoys supporting internal and customer-facing operations. She has designed knowledge bases and user assistance for Customer Success, Human Resources, and Digital Safety teams across the globe. Mirhonda earned the first undergraduate degree in Technical and Professional Communication awarded by Southern Polytechnic State University. She also earned an MBA, with a Knowledge and Learning Management concentration, from Walden University. Mirhonda's key areas of interest include knowledge management, virtual collaboration, information design, and decision sciences.

Bonnie Swanson

Bonnie Swanson is a systems-oriented technical communications professional with 20+ years of experience. As Technical Communications Manager at Proscia, she has built a scalable content strategy, managing translations, standardizing content, and streamlining multichannel publication. She has led the overhaul of Proscia's help center and integrated AI to optimize workflows. With a BS in Physics, a BS in Electrical Engineering, and an MBA, she excels at translating complex engineering concepts into clear, user-friendly documentation and developing systematized approaches to publication workflows.

Amber Swope

Amber Swope is an internationally recognized expert on the Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) and information architect. With over 20 years of experience in the information development field and 15 years of DITA expertise, Amber specializes in helping organizations create opportunity through information architecture. She not only helps teams build scalable IA solutions to future-enable their content, but also mentors team members to advance the architecture as it evolves to meet new business needs.

Katie Tweedy

Beginning her career at Collective Measures over a decade ago, Katie Tweedy is our Director of SEO + Content Marketing. Overseeing the agency's SEO and content marketing practice, she firmly believes that everything should be rooted in data. With experience on diverse brands, she creates content strategies that maximize search visibility and engage audiences throughout their consumer journey. In other words, she brings a strategic and genuinely enthusiastic approach to all things content marketing and SEO, melding science and storytelling to help her clients meet their business objectives.

Noz Urbina

Noz Urbina is one of the few industry professionals who has been working in what we now call "multichannel" and "omnichannel" content design and strategy for over two decades. In that time, he has become a globally recognized leader in the field of content and customer experience. He's well known as a pioneer in customer journey mapping and adaptive content modelling for delivering personalized, contextually-relevant content experiences in any environment. Noz is co-founder and Programme Director of the OmnichannelX Conference and Podcast. He is also co-author of the book "Content Strategy: Connecting the dots between business, brand, and benefits" and lecturer in the Master's Programme in Content Strategy at the University of Applied Sciences of Graz, Austria.

Noz's company, Urbina Consulting, works with the world's largest organizations and most complex content challenges, but his mission is to help all brands be able to have relationships with people, the way that people have with each other. Past clients have included Johnson & Johnson, Eli Lilly, Roche, and Sanofi Pharmaceuticals; Microsoft; Mastercard; Barclays Bank; Abbott Laboratories; National Geographic; and hundreds more.

John Yembrick

John Yembrick is the global director of Content & Editorial Strategy at Lockheed Martin. In this role, he oversees internal and external communications tools, including GenAI,as well as the editorial and content distribution strategies associated with them. He manages the planning, preparation, writing and development of digital communications for the company's intranet, website, social media channels and other platforms, including articles, photographs, videos, graphics and posts. He also oversees Lockheed Martin's external websites, mobile applications and social media properties, with responsibility for content strategy, resource planning, and performance standards for all owned communications channels.

He previously worked as NASA's first digital communications director, sharing some of the most compelling content in the world. John has over 20 years of experience in communications, and has managed media relations, video, still imagery, social media and websites.

LavaCon loves a parade!

We danced with a jazz band in a Second Line Parade down Bourbon Street in New Orleans. We strutted our stuff in Las Vegas and Austin. We carried a colorful dragon from the conference hotel to dinner in Portland. And now, we're in a new location, Atlanta, with another fun parade, followed by an evening of networking and karaoke!

At LavaCon, you don't watch the parade. You are the parade!

Don't miss the fun...register today!

facebook.com/LavaCon

linkedin.com/company/24798755

vimeo.com/LavaCon