

A Mini-PLoP at OOPSLA '07

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Abstract

There has been recognition that the writers' workshop process is beneficial for the production of high quality papers ever since the first patterns conference or PLoP was held in 1994. In this OOPSLA workshop, attendees will participate in a writers' workshop of their paper as well as writers' workshops for papers of other attendees in their group. Participants who do not have a paper to workshop are also invited. Everyone will be expected to read all the papers in their groups in advance. The organizers of this workshop were all involved in PLoP '06 and would like to continue a close association between this important patterns activity and OOPSLA. Our hope is that the relationship will benefit both OOPSLA, by attracting authors of papers that are works-in-progress, and PLoP, by allowing authors who might not be able to attend PLoP to participate in the writers' workshop process.

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1. Introduction

Members of the patterns community have been holding conferences called PLoPs since 1994. PLoP was originally held at Allerton House near the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Since that time, PLoPs have continued at Allerton until 2006 and have spawned other PLoPs at various locations across the globe.

In 2006, PLoP was held in conjunction with OOPSLA and, while it was a success in some respects, it lost some of the special "qualities without a name" that patterns fans have come to expect. This year, a next step was taken in the on-going experiment to improve PLoP attendance, which has been decreasing of late. PLoP '07 was still held at Allerton, and a mini-PLoP was also held at OOPSLA '07.

2. A Mini-PLoP

The mini-PLoP was organized by Bob Hanmer, Linda

Rising, and Joe Yoder. The workshop organizers have been part of the planning and organizing process for numerous PLoPs. Joe Yoder was the <assistant?> chair for PLoP '06 at OOPSLA and the chair for PLoP '07 at Allerton House. The organizers felt they would like to continue a close association between PLoP and OOPSLA.

2.1 Pattern Bootcamp

The mini-PLoP consisted of two days of activities, mirroring similar events at PLoP. On the first day, Sunday, October 21, Bob Hanmer and Linda Rising led a bootcamp for pattern newcomers. Just as they have at several PLoPs at Allerton House (and as they did at PLoP at OOPSLA '06), they provided an introduction to patterns—a training, mentoring, experiencing activity, where participants were immersed in patterns and, hopefully, emerged with an enlarged perspective, ideas for their first pattern, and an ability to get more out of all PLoP conferences. The leaders feel that writing your own pattern is extremely important—there is no better way to learn what patterns are all about!

The presentation format consisted of lecture, discussion, group pattern writing, game playing, and, for most attendees, a chance to attend the writers' workshops held the following day.

The goals for the bootcamp were:

- Become part of the patterns community.
- Understand how good patterns are structured.
- See a variety of pattern formats and understand the trade-offs among alternatives.
- Become comfortable with patterns reading and writing.
- Have a better understanding of what goes on at PLoPs.

2.2 Writers' Workshop

The bootcamp was followed on Monday, October 22, by a full day of writers' workshops, which constitute the primary activity at PLoPs.

Writers' workshops bring together authors who wish to get feedback from collaborative peers. The goal of the workshop is to provide useful comments for the authors and to allow participants to share insights into problems that are encountered over and over again in software development.

Attendees participated in a writers' workshop of their papers as well as writers' workshops for papers of other attendees in their group. Participants without a paper to workshop were also invited. Everyone was expected to read all the papers in their groups in advance and to remain with the group throughout the day.

2.3 Mini-PLOP Schedule

The schedule for the full-day workshops:

Introduction of participants and plan for the day
Workshop 1
Break
Workshop 2
Lunch
Workshop 3
Break
Workshop 4
Closing summary and retrospective

Submitted papers were part of an OOPSLA poster. Updated versions will be posted on the workshop web site http://refactory.com/OOPSLA_Workshop.html

3. Conclusion

Our hope is that the mini-PLoP relationship will benefit both OOPSLA, by attracting authors of papers that are works-in-progress, and the patterns community, by allowing authors who might not be able to attend PLoP to participate in the writers' workshop process.