

TypeCon

SUBMISSION TIPS

How to submit a proposal (with only a little trying)



Welcome to TypeCon!

We are a conference for the community, by the community.

The Society of Typographic Aficionados (SOTA) thanks you for your interest in submitting a programming proposal. As a non-profit organization, TypeCon relies on *your* ideas, knowledge, interests, skills, and generosity to fill our program each year.

You are an integral part of this industry. Please come join us for one of the most vibrant and welcoming events in the typographic and lettering community!

This year we are seeking proposals for 3 types of content:

Main Conference

:20 Presentation

- Presentations exploring topics of interest to type, design, and lettering professionals; artists and printmakers; students and educators

Presentations typically consist of a talk in conjunction with slides.

Workshops

½ Day, Full Day, or 2-Day

- Hands-on, instructional workshops teaching practical skills and techniques, in-depth exploration of various global writing systems, production intensives in design and engineering apps, and professional development

Education Forum

:20 Presentation

- Presentations devoted to addressing the needs of typographic and design educators, in a day of dedicated programming

Presentations typically consist of a talk in conjunction with slides.

TypeCon is an open, equitable, and diverse conference. We have welcomed speakers and workshop leaders from every continent except Antarctica (any letter lovers down there at McMurdo Station want to break the streak?). Half of our 2018 presenters were female. Whether you're a seasoned industry professional or thinking about trying out this "speaking gig" for the first time, we encourage you to submit a proposal!

If you have an idea for additional content like panel discussions, guided field-trips or activities, formal or informal meetups, etc., and wish to propose your idea to the SOTA Board for inclusion in this year's TypeCon, we're all ears! Please submit your idea(s) by emailing program@typecon.com with your name, contact information, and a detailed description of the content you wish to offer TypeCon attendees. Emailed submissions are subject to the same selection process as webform-submitted proposals, as detailed on page 6. **Main Conference Talks, Workshops, and Education Forum Talks must be submitted via webform for Board consideration.**

What exactly is in a proposal?

A proposal is concise package of information that tells the conference organizers about the content you would like to share at TypeCon (and a little bit about you). You'll send this package to us via our [Proposal Submission Form](#).

What info will I need to fill out the Proposal Submission Form?

BASIC CONTACT INFORMATION

- Name*
- Affiliation and professional title*
- Email address & phone number
- Social media handles*

BIOGRAPHY*

- Your brief biography for publication (800 characters or less)

PHOTOGRAPH*

- One headshot image, 1000 pixels square, 72 dpi (please avoid abstract images, illustrations and business logos)

CO-PRESENTER(S)*

- You will need to supply the information above for all co-presenter(s)

PROGRAMMING TYPE*

- Pre-Conference Workshop, or
- Education Forum Talk, or
- Main Conference Talk

ABSTRACT*

- A written summary of your proposed talk or workshop (1200 characters or less)

Pro Tip!

Avoid lost data by writing your abstract and biography in a text document. Copy and paste them into the submission form, rather than typing directly into the form itself.



Important:

If your proposal is accepted, all fields marked with an (*) will be included in both printed and online programs. Fields not marked are kept confidential.

Ed Forum Submissions

will also need to include:

CURRICULUM VITAE

- Your professional CV in a PDF file format

IMAGES

- A ZIP file containing at least 6 supporting images for your talk proposal

Workshop Submissions

will also need to include:

DURATION*

- Half-day, Full-day, or 2 days

PARTICIPANTS*

- Realistic maximum number of attendees you can fairly teach

Find inspiration

To see examples of previously selected talk and workshop proposals, check out [pages 7-12 of this PDF](#) or [past TypeCon programs](#).

Want a few more tips & tricks for crafting your perfect proposal?



REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE

What sort of subject matter would be appealing to the typographers, type designers, graphic designers, lettering artists, calligraphers, printmakers, educators, students, and other “letterheads” who will be attending the conference?



THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

Previous presentations have explored a wide range of topics, including the nuances of designing non-Latin writing systems, font marketing, medieval blackletter calligraphy, and modern-day usage of Futura.



GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

Successful workshop proposals are usually practical, relevant, and hands-on. What skills would someone want to learn to help them earn extra income, or further their career? Highly attended events usually involve topics centered around technique or production.



DO YOUR RESEARCH

If you've never attended a TypeCon before, or if it's been a few years since you've joined us, consider reviewing the past year's program online to make sure your proposal won't overlap with the subject matter of a recent workshop or talk.



GO DEEP, NOT WIDE

Focus on a subject with which you have spent time engaging, not fleeting or random ideas. Relevancy, intent, previous research, and personal experience are necessary components of a solid proposal.



OFFER SOMETHING UNIQUE

Have you conducted new research on a topic? Approached a challenge from a different angle? Collected resources others haven't had access to? What can you share that isn't easily available on the internet? Don't be afraid to get personal – authenticity sells!



PROVIDE CONTEXT AND BE SUCCINCT

In your abstract, be sure to show relevancy between the topic and our industry. Explain not only what you'll be sharing, but why people should learn about it. Describe your talk or workshop in a few clear and engaging paragraphs. **DO NOT** exceed 1,200 characters. (Get an accurate count [here](#).) Your abstract will be printed in the program.



WHAT DOESN'T GET SELECTED

Proposals that tend to score lower are typically portfolio presentations, sales-pitch style proposals, demonstrations of common techniques or technology, and talks previously presented at recent TypeCons or other type industry conferences.

Frequently Asked Questions

Have a question about the TypeCon submission process or writing an abstract? You've come to the right place! Read on for additional information that will help you complete and submit your proposal.

How do I know if my topic is interesting enough?

If you're fascinated by a particular topic, there's a good chance others will be too! Consider highlighting how your idea is relevant to current design trends, how it informs practical theory, or how audience members can benefit and learn from your discoveries.

Can I submit more than one proposal?

Sure! Presenters commonly submit more than one proposal and often make proposals in multiple categories (talks, workshops, etc.). Please note that in the event a submitter has two or more high scoring proposals, only the highest scoring proposal will make the program.

Can I resubmit a past proposal that wasn't selected?

Yes! Because we only have 5 days of programming opportunities we're unable to approve all of the fantastic talk and workshop ideas TypeCon participants submit. (And believe us, there are so many!) If you have submitted a proposal for a previous TypeCon and it was not selected, you are welcome to resubmit your idea. Consider updating your abstract for a greater chance of success.

Will I get paid?

Speakers and workshop leaders receive an in-kind exchange: if your proposal is selected, you will receive complementary registration to the Main Conference. (A \$500 value.) Workshop fees remain the responsibility of each participant.

TypeCon is unique among typographic conferences: it provides all attendees with numerous complementary coffee breaks, continental breakfasts, daily snacks and evening events with free food and alcoholic beverages. Where else can you learn about variable fonts while enjoying fresh waffle cones?!

Please note that accommodations and travel expenses are the responsibility of each attendee. The hotel makes available a limited number of rooms to TypeCon participants at a deeply discounted rate. We encourage you to take advantage and book your accommodations early!

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Frequently Asked Questions Continued...

How are proposals selected?

SOTA utilizes a blind selection process to choose which proposals will be included in the conference. This method reduces bias and ensures that selections are based on merit, thoughtfulness, and quality.

Before the process begins, one SOTA board member is chosen to remove all identifying attributes from each submitted proposal (including names and affiliations) to prevent influence on the panel of scorers. This board member abstains from scoring. The scoring panel consists of the remaining sitting SOTA Board Members as well as independent, qualified, non-affiliated individuals in the field. The panel remains anonymous while voting.

Each scorer assigns a rank from 1 to 5 to each proposal, with 5 being the highest score possible. Proposals with the highest cumulative scores receive priority in the program in one of three categories: the Main Program, the Ed Forum, or Workshops. If a submitter has two or more high scoring proposals, the highest scoring proposal will make the program.

When will I find out if my proposal was selected?

If your proposal is selected for TypeCon 2019, you will be notified by a SOTA Board Member or representative via email in mid-April.

I have an idea for an event. Who do I contact?

That's fantastic! Thank you so much for brainstorming together with us. If you have ideas for panel discussions, field-trips, informal meet-ups or other special events, please email them to: program@typecon.com. If you'd like to host a party or special event, please include the word "HOSTING" in your subject line.

I have more questions. Help!

If you have a question we haven't answered, you can reach us via email at the following address: program@typecon.com.

Remember, no question is too big or small: the only silly questions are those that go unasked. Please don't be shy – we are here to help you!

Wondering what an abstract looks like?

We've included several examples of previously-selected abstracts on the following pages, along with the speakers' biographies. Please feel free to use these samples for inspiration as you craft your proposal!

MAIN CONFERENCE TALK PROPOSAL

Name:

Matthew Wyne

Biography:

After falling in love with typography, then cocktails, Matthew Wyne has created a career built on the intersection of these two artforms. He studied type design at the Cooper Union under Jean Francois Porchez and Sumner Stone, then undertook a three year research project to learn how cocktails have been represented typographically since their birth in the late 1600s. His blog, Letters and Liquor, explores the drinks that changed the way we define the term "cocktail" and each one is lettered in period-inspired fashion. He lives in San Francisco where he draws, writes, shakes and stirs on a daily (or nightly) basis.

Title:

Letters and Liquor: A Typographic History of Cocktails

Abstract:

If your cocktail were a typeface, what would it be?

For the past three years I have traveled the world in search of cocktail ephemera to learn how we represented our drinking in typographic form. From the tavern signs of the American colonies to the Pinterest-influenced menus of today's contemporary Speakeasies, I have compiled an extensive collection of liquor-related lettering that is every bit as bewitching as the potions it advertises.

This exercise was born from my desire to create work for the spirits category that has historical integrity, but it has also given me incredible insight into typographic development because the lens I've chosen for my study is so specific.

Join me for a salubrious survey of type as seen from the barrooms and bottles of our 300 year love affair with cocktails. Refreshments, sadly, will be limited to the visual realm.



What makes it great?

Matthew's proposal is a study in how to write an engaging abstract!

He opens with a thought-provoking question, pauses with a carriage return, and then deftly explains both his familiarity with the topic (the who) and the topic itself (the what) in just two sentences. From there, he pauses again before explaining his motivation and passion (the why). Finally, Matthew invites the reader to join him in a visual journey through typographic history.

Not only do we know exactly what to expect from Matthew's presentation, we can practically see these bottles already! His descriptive language paints a vivid picture of the talk's content and sparks our imagination. Look at his word choices: ephemera, bewitching, potions, desire, salubrious. It is clear this will be no ordinary talk!

MAIN CONFERENCE TALK PROPOSAL, WITH CO-PRESENTER

Name: Travis Kochel

Biography: Travis is a partner at Scribble Tone, a Portland based studio that specializes in the design of typefaces, interfaces, and brands. In 2018 they helped create Future Fonts, a platform for licensing in-progress typefaces. Scribble Tone runs Trail Type, an online collection of type found in the wilderness. They have also designed a number of typefaces, most notably FF Chartwell.

Name: Lizy Gershenzon

Biography: Lizy is a partner at Scribble Tone, a Portland based studio that specializes in the design of typefaces, interfaces, and brands. In 2018 they helped create Future Fonts, a platform for licensing in-progress typefaces. Scribble Tone runs Trail Type, an online collection of type found in the wilderness. They have also designed a number of typefaces, most notably FF Chartwell.

Title: It's Okay to Make Mitsakes

Abstract: Perfection is a great thing to strive for, but it can prevent growth. It encourages us to stay within the bounds of what we can do well, and discourages taking risks. What are we really scared of, and how does it hold us back? What can we gain from making mistakes?

This look at risk taking and mistakes will be framed around the typeface design process, and what we've learned from creating Future Fonts. It will include a new twist on an age-old question, "Do we really need more fonts... that are half-finished and probably have mistakes?" We can't promise answers, but we sure will have fun with the analysis.



What makes it great?

Proposals submitted by companies, about companies, typically don't score very highly during the selection process. (That's an infomercial, not a conference presentation!) But Travis and Lizy's proposal proved to be an exception – it ranked highly in 2018... Why?

Their abstract made it clear that the talk would not be focused on "Future Fonts, the company," or a portfolio. Instead, Travis and Lizy conveyed that their experiences were widely relevant to other type designers and distributors. They asked thoughtful, probing questions and reflected on the nature of design. It's clear the talk will serve a larger purpose. They even worked the theme of their talk into the title itself, by intentionally misspelling the word "Mistake". Clever!

Co-presenter biographies do not have to be similar. If your talk features multiple speakers, consider writing each presenter's backstory and personality in their unique voice.

EDUCATION FORUM TALK PROPOSAL

Name:

Annabelle Gould

Biography:

Annabelle Gould is an Associate Professor in the Visual Communication Design program at the University of Washington, Seattle. Her focus is on teaching typography as a primary means of communication and creative expression. Annabelle is also a practicing designer specializing in editorial design and typography. Her client list includes Chronicle Books, the University of Washington, the Traver Gallery, University of Washington Press, Marquand Books, and ARCADE Magazine. Annabelle received a BGD in Graphic Design from North Carolina State University and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. Her work has been recognized in the AIGA 50 Books/50 Covers show and by the Type Director's Club, the Society of Publication Designers, the University & College Designers Association and Print Magazine.

Title:

Combining Type + Image / Interpreting Constitutional Amendments

Abstract:

This talk will present an Advanced Typography project in which juniors in Visual Communication Design and Interaction Design were asked to design a poster interpreting one of the U.S. Constitutional Amendments.

The assignment and accompanying lectures centered around how typography acts as a communication tool—both conceptually and visually. Students learned four basic methods—as outlined in the book "Type, Image, Message" by Skolos + Wedell—for combining type and image.

This presentation will explain those four ways to combine type and image: Separation, Fragmentation, Fusion, and Inversion, and present final poster solutions from the class representing each method. The talk will also show process work.

Even though this was a typography course, most students tried to use images rather than text to present complex issues such as diversity, equality and women's rights. They quickly found that most images used to represent these concepts were cliché. When they turned to typography their solutions were more effective and unique. The assignment also explored grids, use of color, effective typesetting and working in a large format (final posters are 16 by 22 inches).



What makes it great?

Annabelle's straight-forward and extremely detailed third-person abstract tells readers exactly what she'll be discussing and why this topic is relevant for educators. Thorough doesn't have to mean lengthy!

In just under 1,200 characters, we learn a significant amount of background information about the project as well as the content's relevancy for audience members. There's also a concise summary of solutions, and the promise of many visuals during the talk itself.

EDUCATION FORUM TALK PROPOSAL

Name:

Renée Seward

Biography:

Renée is an Associate Professor and Program Director of the Communication Design program at the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning. Renée has been teaching typography, exhibition design, and graphic design in the Communication Design program for the last ten years. Her research focuses on the development of digital and physical multi-sensory tools that seek to address literacy problems. Currently she is starting a company for See Word Reading®, a multi-sensory tool that uses dynamic letterforms to teach early reading principles through a suite of digital iPad applications. Renée is a 2015 Cincy Innovates winner for See Word Reading®. Recently she has been awarded \$100,000 of Ohio Third Frontier funding to help with the commercialization of this tool. Additionally, the project was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the National Institute of Education for a two year test of the tool.

Title:

Addressing Literacy Problems Through Typography

Abstract:

“Researchers have discovered that a child's memory for words is not entirely or even principally rote but based off of recognizing visual and auditory patterns in words overtime.” (Moat 2007)

This presentation will share the ongoing research that makes evident the visual and auditory pattern in words through multi-sensory letterforms.

It began as a thesis project and has grown into active research in the development of typography and a reading application that teaches early reading skills. It speculates on how multi-sensory typography can address the core reading related issues in dyslexia and at-risk readers—associating a letter name with the letterform, mapping sounds onto symbols, learning to associate orthographic patterns with the sounds they represent, recognizing an orthographic pattern as a whole word.

From the early thesis studies, the See Word Reading® tool was developed, which is actively being used in classrooms within the US and Singapore. The original font studies created in the thesis will be discussed, and then the evolution of the reading tool will be explained.

Lastly, a case study of the use of See Word Reading® in schools and organizations like the YMCA Cincinnati, Cincinnati Children Hospital, several public schools with at-risk populations, and 5 bi-lingual schools in Singapore will be shared.



What makes it great?

Quotations make effective hooks! Rather than opening with a question, Renée shares a recent quote from her field of study. Having captured the readers' attention, she explicitly explains her presentation in detail – artfully describing her level of expertise with its subject, the real-world solution that arose, and how that tool can be of use to others.

WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

Name:

Katherine Malmsten

Biography:

I integrate hand lettering into design, and work with other designers doing the lettering only. My work has been published internationally and I have taught classes and workshops on local and national levels, including at several international conferences. I have particular interest in new and experimental tools, using them to create letterforms that have visual texture. Contemporary interpretations of traditional forms, using text in its visual and verbal aspects (how it looks as well as what it says), and mixing elements all find their way into my work.

Title:

Lettering with Ruling and Folded Pens

Abstract:

These pens allow the user to create lively, vigorous and spontaneous letterforms. If calligraphy is the dance of the pen, then ruling pen letters are rock 'n roll!

Originally used for drawing lines, we'll trace how this tool began to be used for lettering, and the styles we have available today. Exercises will allow becoming more comfortable with the pens, what different fluids and papers are used with them, and different grips and manipulation. We'll try letters we know, variations on those, and then try some new letterforms, varying speed and movement for different results.

Be prepared to get loose, go through lots of paper, and search for that happy medium of "controlled spontaneity"!

Supply list will be provided.



What makes it great?

A successful workshop proposal showcases the personality of its instructor and answers the (many) questions potential participants may have. Katherine has written a warm and cheerful abstract that anticipates these questions while exciting the reader. She also concisely explains exactly what attendees can expect.

In just over 700 characters, she details what tool the workshop will be centered around, why the tool is unique and important, the tool's history, and describes the many exercises in which students will participate.

Perhaps most importantly, she also pre-emptively answers the question on everyone's minds: what should participants bring to the workshop?

WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

Name: Aaron Bell

Biography: Aaron Bell is a typeface designer and consultant based in Seattle, WA. He owns Saja Typeworks, and specializes in Latin and East Asian writing systems, with a particular focus on Korean Hangul. Previously, he graduated from the MATD program at the University of Reading, UK and spent 6 years working at Microsoft on the Microsoft Typography Team.

Title: ㄱ to ㅎ: An Intro to Hangul Design

Abstract: Do you sometimes dream of ㅎ, or find yourself staring a little too long at a wayward ㄱ? Have you wanted to try your hand at designing Hangul, but have no idea where or how to start? Then this is the workshop for you!

During this session, we will dive headfirst into the fascinating world of Korean type, both historical and modern. You'll learn about the rules that govern Hangul (and which ones you can break!) and try your hand at your own Hangul letters. With lots of examples to look at, one-on-one instruction, and critique, you will come away with everything you need to start your own journey toward Hangul mastery.

Materials will be provided, but if you have favorite drawing / sketching tools, feel free to bring them! If you'd like to digitize your work, please bring a laptop.



What makes it great?

It's very important to convey what a workshop will "look" like as the day unfolds. Potential participants (and the selection panel) will evaluate the quality and relevancy of your workshop based on your abstract description. Use descriptive language to tell them why participants should consider spending four, eight, or sixteen hours with you and what they can expect to experience during that time.

Aaron does this by asking open-ended "framing" questions that convey the skill level participants should have, by explaining the workshop's schedule, and by describing the skills participants can expect to develop.

The result is a detailed and organized picture of what this workshop can offer. An orderly abstract suggests the writer is prepared to lead a group.



Want to see more examples?

We can help! To view all of the abstracts that were selected for inclusion within TypeCon 2018, [click here](#). You'll be able to download a PDF program describing each workshop and presentation in the presenter's own words.

Questions? Suggestions? Let us know: program@typecon.com

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Thank you and good luck!

We look forward to seeing you at TypeCon.

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