

Proposal for Shorter Talks at the CHI Conference

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Prepared by: Bo Begole, Wendy Kellogg (CHI 2011 Technical Program Chairs) and Desney Tan (CHI 2011 Conference Chair)

Summary

Beginning with CHI 2011, we propose a two-year trial of a program schedule with shorter presentation times: 20 minutes for full papers, 10 minutes for short papers in an 80 minute session (i.e., 4 full papers per session or equivalent mix of full and short papers). The proposed schedule will not reduce the time of any social activity (breaks, lunch, etc.) and in fact will slightly increase the time for lunch and afternoon breaks as well as end the program day 40 minutes earlier than in the past.

Motivation

The proposed change is motivated by two objectives: 1) increase the energy at the conference and 2) increase the amount of content that attendees will be exposed to during the conference. Shorter talks will produce more concise presentations with higher information density that we feel will have a positive impact on attendees' perception of quality. Shorter talks will also allow attendees to experience more pieces of content in the program within the same amount of time. This will have a positive effect on the top two reasons attendees cited as the value of attending CHI in the CHI 2009 survey: 1) *Get new ideas, and inspiration* and 2) *Learn new material*. Because we are not proposing any reduction to the social times or numbers of events, we believe this proposal will have minimal downside impact on the third and fourth most valuable aspects that CHI 2009 attendees cited: 3) *Meet new friends and colleagues*, and 4) *Renew relationships with others*.

Feasibility

To investigate the scheduling and logistics feasibility, we modeled the attached schedule (CHI2011_shortTalksPlan_v2.pdf, also shown in Table 1, below) on the content from the Tuesday program from CHI 2009 (also attached for comparison: Tuesday Program from CHI09Program.pdf). All program sessions are 80 minutes long, except the first session of the day which is 60 minutes, which retains the hour break in the morning from 10-11 and may encourage attendance at the Morning Madness session (though that is a secondary benefit).

Table 1. CHI 2011 proposed program schedule. Time blocks are shown at relative scale.

CHI 2011 Short talks schedule		9:00-10:00					10:00-11:00 - Break					11:00-12:20					12:20-14:00 - Lunch					14:00-15:20					15:20-16:00 - Break					16:00-17:20										
Tuesday	8:15-9:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50	:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50	:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50	:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50	:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50	:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50	:00	:10	:20	:30	:40	:50
Room 1 Panels		Paper	Paper	Paper								Panel												Panel												Panel						
Room 2 Papers & Notes		Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper	Note	Note			
Room 3 Papers & Notes		Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper	Note	Note			
Room 4 Papers & Notes		Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper	Note	Note			
Room 5 Papers & Notes		Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper	Note	Note			
Room 6 Papers & Notes		Paper	Paper	Paper								Paper	Paper	Paper	Paper								Interactivity											Mini CHI								
Room 7 Communities & SIGs		SIG										SIG											SIG											Community Event								
Room 8 Communities & SIGs		Community Event										Community Event											Community Event											Video Showcase								
Room 9 Courses		Half-day course 1										Half-day course 1											Half-day course 2											Half-day course 2								
Room 10 Courses		Full-day course 1										Full-day course 1											Full-day course 1											Full-day course 1								
Room 11 Courses		Full-day course 2										Full-day course 2											Full-day course 2											Full-day course 2								

Impact

We anticipate the following tradeoffs.

Cons

- Shorter time to present complex results, increasing potential for confusion
- More speaker transitions during a session
- Tighter schedule for attendees who hop sessions
- Confusion for repeat attendees due to change from previous CHI program schedules
- Larger audience size could complicate room planning
- 40 minutes reduction in time for full-day and morning-only half-day courses, 20 min reduction for afternoon-only half-day courses.
- No Panels in the first session (because of 60-minute time block)

Pros

- More concise presentations, higher information density
- An attendee can see more presentations within a day (15 rather than 12)
- Easier to remember schedule - all sessions begin on an hour boundary (9:00, 11:00, 14:00, 16:00)
- Fewer sessions to select among, reducing "Tyranny of Choice" effects
- Larger audiences increases exposure of presentations
- Shorter time between start of Madness and morning break (1:45, rather than 2:15)
- Slightly longer lunch break (1:40 rather than 1:30)
- Slightly longer afternoon break (40 mins rather than 30)
- Slightly fewer session rooms (5 rather than 6)
- Slightly shorter sessions (80 mins rather than 90)
- Day ends 40 mins earlier (17:20 rather than 18:00)
- Fewer session chairs to recruit (a minor advantage)

Mitigation Strategy

To mitigate the cons, we plan the following actions.

- **To address authors' concerns from having less time to present:** Email to accepted authors with the new schedule times and suggestions to achieve clarity in their presentations within the allotted time
- **To minimize speaker transition time:** Use laptop switch-boxes at the podium and require speakers to preconnect prior to the session (this is current practice already)
- **To address attendees' potential confusion from new schedule:** Prominent publicity of the new schedule times on the conference web page and in the online and print program.
- **To address larger audience logistics:** For 2011, the Vancouver Convention Center will be able to accommodate the increased audience sizes with no additional cost.
- **To address shortened first session use by SIGs and Community events:** if there is no SIG or Community event that would fit well within the shortened first session (60 mins), the event can be scheduled in a track later in the day. (e.g., Video Showcase is listed during the afternoon in the proposed schedule, but has been an evening event in the past, making room for another SIG/Community event.)

Evaluation Plan

We propose that this schedule be adopted for 2 years to provide an adequate period to evaluate the tradeoffs. The first year of the introduction, there may be some negative effect caused simply by the introduction of the change. In the second year, attendees will have had a chance to become accustomed to the new schedule. The second year will provide a better evaluation point.

To evaluate the effects of the change, the following questions will be added to the post-conference survey. The question is modeled after an existing survey question addressing the 4-day, versus 3-day conference time.

This year, the technical program schedule had 20 minute presentations for full papers and 10 minutes for short papers (in contrast to 30/15 of prior years). For me, these were:

- *Too short*
- *Too long*
- *About right*

We will request that the CHI 2010 post conference survey include a similar question to use as a baseline:

This year, the technical program schedule had 30 minute presentations for full papers and 15 minutes for short papers. For me, these were:

- *Too short*
- *Too long*
- *About right*