Plone Conference 2011, San Francisco

Greetings fellow Plone Community members:

On behalf of David Brenneman, Tom Kapanka, and Elizabeth Leddy we are happy to present this proposal to host the 2011 Plone Conference in San Francisco, California, USA.

San Francisco is a world-class city, known for many things, but foremost its independent spirit, progressive attitudes, and friendly people. It is gifted with an environment like none other. Situated atop the Silicon Valley peninsula, San Francisco has a bustling downtown, unique neighborhoods and "micro-climates", a thriving arts community, and is a world-leader in environmentalism, equal rights, and technology. This, combined with its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, stunning parks, beaches, and vibrant culture, it's no wonder so many have "left their hearts in San Francisco."

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Vision & Goals

The main goals for the 2011 Plone Conference are simple and straightforward:

1. Promote Plone as a world-class, enterprise ready, best-in-class CMS.

2. Raise awareness of the benefits of Plone and the Open Source ecosystem within the Silicon Valley mindset, and showcase Plone as a leader in this very competitive marketplace.

3. To provide an affordable, practical, welcoming, and functional environment for the Plone community, and those interesting in learning more about Plone, to gather, interact, and learn.

4. Establish a framework for future Plone Conference hosts to leverage without having to "reinvent the wheel" each time.

It is also very important the attendees to have a great time and enjoy themselves while taking their valuable time away from their work and families, therefore it is a goal to provide exciting and enriching entertainment for a variety of interests.

Conference Dates

The conference is tentatively planned for late October, 2011. The proposed venue has a variety of dates open, but it is desirable to finalize these dates quickly so the venue can be secured if we are selected.

Oct 24, Mon	Training
Oct 25, Tue	Training
Oct 26, Wed	**Conference**
Oct 27, Thu	**Conference**
Oct 28, Fri	**Conference**
Oct 29, Sat	**Conference**
Oct 30, Sun	Sprint
Oct 31, Mon	Sprint & Halloween!

As you can see, an additional day has been added to the conference. It is hoped that by formally adding this additional day, attendees will be encouraged to stay a little longer and enjoy what San Francisco has to offer as a group. Rather than a "rush to the finish," we propose to have this final day be geared more towards camaraderie and community-building, rather than talks and presentations. This idea is open for debate and feedback from potential attendees.
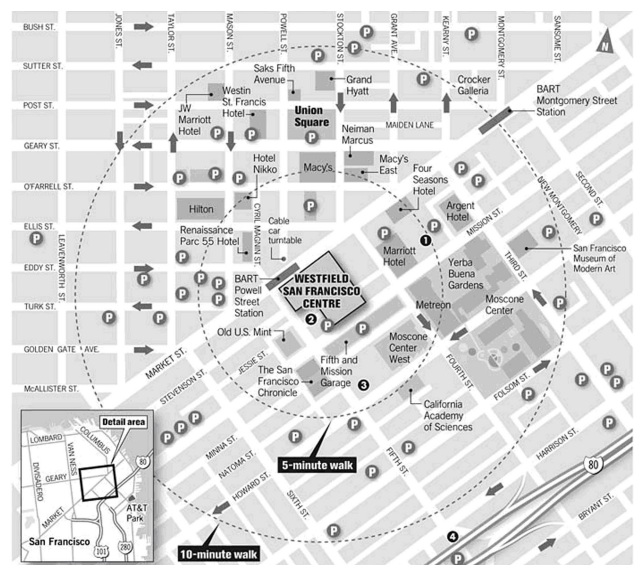
Conference Venue

Several venues have been considered for this event, with careful attention given to the unique needs of the Plone community. Obviously, ample space and resources are paramount for an event of this size and scope, but other factors such as ease-of-access, flow, and logistics were also taken into consideration.

That said, the San Francisco State University's (SFSU) downtown campus building has been chosen as best suited to meet our needs. The venue is located right in the heart of downtown San Francisco, on Market Street, the main thoroughfare of the city, and mere steps from dozens, if not hundreds of bars, shops, restaurants, and tourist attractions. The facility is modern, secure, and very flexible and affordable in their offerings, making it ideal for the conference.

SFSU's facilities offer several features that make it attractive:

1. The building sits atop a major transit station, with service to BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), with direct connections to San Francisco International airport, and MUNI, the light rail system. One merely needs to get off at the correct stop, and you're at the location!

2. Most major bus lines stop directly in front of the building, offering access to the entire city.

3. San Francisco's famous trolleys (cable cars) stop directly across the street.

4. The facility adjoins the busting Westfield Mall shopping center, which among other things provides immediate access to its food court with a robust offering of quality food choices (not fast food), morning to night.

5. State of the art facilities allow for recording of the conference, with their integrated A/V system.

6. The venue does not have restrictions on catering, or lock-in with their vendors.

7. Being in the heart of downtown San Francisco, the venue is easy to find, and major hotels are just steps away.

8. The venue adjoins the Century Theater complex, allowing us a perfect space for the entire group to convene for keynotes and any other "full group" gatherings. This is a major hurdle that most venues fail to provide for.

9. The price is right!

SFSU, being a university, offers multiple rooms of various sizes for our use, ranging from 37 to 100 people per room. The chosen rooms are adjoining, allowing conference participants to move freely between them with ease. There is a central registration area and several common spaces for attendees who are not attending talks. The large open common spaces of the Westfield Center are a short walk away. Finally, each room is equipped with A/V equipment including projectors (beamers), whiteboards, microphones, and video cameras.

http://www.sfsu.edu/~downtown/images/index.htm

This venue will more than likely not be used for the pre- and post-conference events simply because it is believed that the attendance will not be great enough to warrant the space. Other smaller, but equally central and capable spaces have been investigated for these events. Again, these spaces will be reserved when it is known whether San Francisco has been elected to host, and the schedule finalized.

Registration fees
It is a goal to keep the conference costs to a minimum, especially considering that there are many in the Plone community that will come from long distances, especially those coming

from overseas. We also understand that many developers are independent and on a tight budget. For this reason it is proposed that we offer tiered pricing for the conference:

Early Bird: $250
Budget: $175
Speaker: $225
Regular: $300
Executive: $500 (TBD)

Please refer to the logistics section below for more details.

About the Organizers

Tom Kapanka has been active in the Plone community in some form or another for over 6 years. He has helped coordinate several Plone conferences (Vienna, Budapest), as well as multiple sprints across the globe. He is one of 3 Plone Snow Sprint "lifers." He has experience organizing large-scale events in a variety of chaotic and challenging environments, ranging from private events to the Burning Man Project.

Elizabeth Leddy has eaten Plone for breakfast 5 times a week for over 7 years. Plone has helped her fight off numerous colds, flus, and unwanted pregnancies. As an organizer of the San Francisco Plone Meetup, she is an expert at scheduling the unschedulable and talking Limi into attending events. She has never been a bridezilla and hopes to die alone, so this is her only chance to make her inner girl's dream come true.

If elected to host the conference, we plan to solicit assistance in planning, setting up, and running this daunting project from friends, peers, and other reliable local community members.

CONFERENCE LOGISTICS

Keynote

A keynote address is planned for the conference, and it hoped that top talent from local tech-companies, Silicon Valley, and the wider Bay Area can be scheduled to speak. Since gathering the entire conference together in once space is a logistical challenge, we propose to rent an adjacent theater to host the keynote. Popcorn will be served!

Network

As with the past 2 conferences, Wyn Williams will be managing the wifi network at the conference. The San Francisco team will work closely with the conference venue in advance to provide the necessary information and bandwidth necessary for Wyn and his team. Wyn has proven, repeatedly and beyond a doubt, that he is capable of installing and managing a network that can withstand a Plone Conference.

Finances

Managing finances and cash-flow is a serious responsibility. Every effort will be made to establish transparent practices that foster accountability and can withstand external audit.

The bevvy of accounting and management tools available will be use. If selected official roles and responsibilities for managing and tracking finances will be established. Sidestepping past pitfalls in terms of managing cash will be given the utmost importance. For example, alternate methods of accepting payment will be investigated to avoid having critical assets tied up by, for example, PayPal.

Sponsorship

To help offset costs, major sponsors will be sought for the conference. These sponsorships will be critical in helping fund the event itself, especially in the areas of cash-flow, deposits, and insurance. By procuring sponsors early, the pressure of collecting and relying solely on registrations fees for general pre-conference expenditures will be somewhat alleviated. A system of subsidies will be worked out to assist those with financial need who meet certain (TBD) criteria for assistance, and some of these funds may come from sponsorships as well.

Archiving

Recording the conference talks and making them available online is almost as important as the conference itself, as many are unable to attend and the presentations are often once-in-a-lifetime occurrences. This aspect of producing the conference will not be an afterthought. Each room at the conference venue is outfitted with the equipment necessary to archive the event. Personnel dedicated to operating the recording equipment will be provided during the conference, and every effort will be made to make the content available online as quickly as possible after the conference.

Food & Drink

There are many problems raised when hosting a large conference, one in particular being when and how to feed a large number of people with quality food, at a reasonable price, often in a space that is not conducive to serving and eating. Conference venues are often notorious for their food and quality of service. We have chosen to take different approach, and we believe this will achieve several goals at once. Rather than hosting formal menus at scheduled meal times, conference-goers will be able to eat whatever they wish, whenever they wish, within their budget. This is accomplished by leveraging the expansive adjoining food court in the Westfield Center which boasts 23 food service locations. However, basic amenities such as water, juice, coffee, and light local snacks will be available directly within the conference rooms throughout the day, free of charge. Breakfast and lunch can instead be taken at the whim of the participant. By taking this approach we hope to solve the following ubiquitous conference problems:

1. Terrible food and limited choices, especially for those with varied dietary needs.

2. Long queues of hungry people for an overtaxed catering staff.

3. Limited or poor makeshift eating space.

4. Individuals forced to eat only at scheduled times, whereas they might be hungry at different times in the day.

5. Requiring those who may eat more or less to pay the same amount, as costs are rolled into the conference fee.

Instead, conference participants will be able to:

1. Choose what they want to eat

2. Decide how much to spend on food throughout the day

3. Choose when and how often to eat

4. Eat quality food that is made to order

5. Dine in a comfortable, staffed space designed for eating

6. Eat in a reasonable amount of time

Taking this approach will also help keep conference fees down, as catering companies, especially those forced upon by contractual obligation of many conference venues, are often terribly expensive and a poor value.

Finally, the "Regular" conference fee will include a limited budget for eating at the food court*, whereas the "Budget" fee does not include any meals.

The Environment

Environmentalism is a touchstone of San Francisco culture and California has been leader and pioneer in implementing recycling programs. Every effort will be taken by the organizers to reduce waste by thoughtful planning and procurement of materials, reuse materials whenever possible and appropriate, and recycle any waste materials that may be produced. Finally, the facility, including the food court also provides fine-grained recycling facilities and composting.

Accessibility

In compliance with California laws, the entire facility, as well as the adjacent transit system, and airport (SFO) are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible.

Conference Schedule Conflicts

The dates proposed for the conference do not conflict with any religious holidays.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE & FORMAT

Pre & Post Conference

Per usual, there will be time before and after the conference for those who wish to make the most of their visit. Before the conference, there will be a chance for trainings, should a training provider want to leverage this time. This year, a sprint is also scheduled before the conference, and it is hoped that the topic of the sprint would be something germane to the

conference itself and could be showcased to the entire community. After the conference, there is also customarily a short sprint. As these plans solidify in the coming weeks, appropriately-sized venues will be chosen to host these events. Of course, participants are welcome to arrive as early or stay as late as they wish to enjoy everything the extended San Francisco Bay Area has to offer.

Open Spaces

The organizers feel that the Open Spaces format is one of the most valuable types of interactions that occur during a conference, and there will be special attention paid to them. It is unclear yet how exactly to balance this against traditional talks, but needless to say look for there to be a noticeable increase in the amount of time dedicated to Open Spaces.

Lightning Talks

Lightning Talks are also a great way for people to get more involved in the community and learn from each other. A generous amount of time will be allotted for Lightning Talks.

Plone Community Party

The Plone community takes its partying very seriously, and none more seriously than this particular set of organizers. Rest assured that the Community Party Finale is not to be missed. It is the intention to leverage the unique confluence of arts communities that are present in the Bay Area, including, but not limited to musicians, performance artists, fire artists, robotics, and the like. A distinctly unique, yet affordable venue is being sought in concert with veteran organizers from the Burning Man, and other local arts organizations. The price of the conference will be included in the registration fee.

SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco is a popular international tourist destination, renowned for its chilly summer fog, steep rolling hills, eclectic mix of Victorian and modern architecture and its famous landmarks, including the Golden Gate Bridge, cable cars, and Chinatown. The city is also a principal banking and finance center, and the home to more than 30 international financial institutions, helping to make San Francisco eighteenth place in the world's top producing cities, ninth in the United States, and fifteenth place in the top twenty Global Financial Centers.

Getting there

San Francisco International Airport (IATA: SFO, ICAO: KSFO, FAA LID: SFO) is a major international airport located 13 miles (21 km) south of downtown San Francisco, California, United States, adjacent to the cities of Millbrae and San Bruno. SFO is serviced by over 40 major airlines, may with direct flights to all major European airports, the Pacific Rim, South America, and Australasia. For those coming from India and South Asia, Emirates Air flies non-stop from Dubai.

It is the largest airport in the San Francisco Bay Area, and is the second busiest airport in the state of California after Los Angeles International Airport. As of 2009, San Francisco International Airport is the tenth busiest in the United States and the twentieth largest

airport in the world, in terms of passengers. It is a major hub of United Airlines and Virgin America's principal base of operations. SFO has numerous passenger amenities, including a wide range of food and drink establishments, shopping, baggage storage, public showers, a medical clinic, and assistance for lost or stranded travelers and military personnel. Free Wi-Fi is available to the public throughout most of the terminal area.

Most importantly, the airport is [finally!] serviced by the local transit system, BART, which can be taken directly to the conference facility for less than $9USD, one way.

Please visit the Wikipedia page for information on major carriers serviced by SFO:

https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/San_Francisco_International_Airport#Airlines_and_destinations

The US offers nationwide rail and bus service. While these are viable modes of transport, just get on a plane. There are no two ways about it, the Amtrak train and Greyhound bus services are simply miserable.

Restaurants

Northern California is known for its amazing and varied cuisines. From the classic "Mission burrito" to the sushi restaurants that seem to be on every corner nowadays, if it's eaten, it can most likely be found here. San Francisco is also home to a relatively new phenomenon, "Street Food," where locals pack their unique foods onto carts, bikes, and trucks and move about the city, posting their whereabouts via Twitter. Offering an affordable and unique dining experience, we hope to recruit these food carts to join us for an evening.

Beer

The United States has a terrible global reputation for the quality of its domestic beers, perpetuated by multinational conglomerates' export of some of he worst beer known to man, the American Lager. Rest assured that Budweiser is not the only beer available here, in fact quite the opposite is true. It is time to settle this score once and for all, by introducing the Plone Community to the ubiquitous and thriving independent and micro-breweries of the United States, and specifically the West Coast. Hopefully we can simultaneously raise awareness of Plone, Open Source, Python, and delicious, mature American beers.

Nightlife

A major aspect of any Plone conference is the nightlife. This is an important, and sometime the only time for community members to meet each other face-to-face in a social setting. San Francisco offers a wide range of nightlife, from bars and clubs to the fine arts. Each night there will be activities planned to bring the community

out from behind their laptops and into the city. Hosting everyone at the same time is very challenging, but best efforts will be made to accommodate everyone if not in the same venue, at least in a geographically close area in foster interaction. After dinner, a variety of options will be presented to suit a range of tastes. Not everyone's idea of a good time is loud dance music until 4am.

Weather

You may have heard the phrase "the coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco" (which has been oft-wrongly attributed to Mark Twain). The saying may be true, but the Plone conference is in the fall, which is by far the best time to visit. Insensitively called "Indian Summer", Sept–Nov is the time of year where, while everyone else in the northern hemisphere is preparing for fall foliage and getting out sweaters and mittens, San Franciscans are getting out their skirts, t-shirts, and sandals. While we can't predict the weather, we can definitely say that there is no better time of year for the conference to be hosted here.

San Francisco is also known for its "micro-climates" which are formed by the unique hills and valleys of the city, combined with the proximity to the ocean and the bay. Because of this, the weather can change drastically from neighborhood to neighborhood (see: "it's always sunny in the mission"). That said, the downtown area is generally consistent.

The average high temperature is 70° (21°C) and the average low temperature is 55°F (13°C) in October, with an average rainfall of 1 inch (2.54cm).

Accommodations

Like many metropolitan areas, hotels can range far and wide in terms of price and quality. Most major international hotel chains are located mere blocks from the conference venue, although these can be the costlier of the options. Every effort will be made to secure bulk-rate discounts at several different hotels at a variety of price ranges. Well in advance of the conference, a list of recommended places to stay will be posted. We are considering offering an "all-inclusive" package rate for the conference that will include food, lodging, and a local transit pass, although in the end this may prove unattractive to many and not worth the effort of planning. Feedback will be sought from the community on this matter.

Currency

San Francisco has the unfortunate circumstance of being located in the United States and therefore must use the US Dollar ($USD) as legal tender. The good news is that just about every other currency in the world is currently valued higher, so chances are your local currency will buy more Dollars.

Language

Although San Francisco is a multi-cultural city with a diverse ethnic background, American English is spoken here. There is no noticeable dialect or accent that would give anyone who speaks English as a second language any trouble. If made aware in advance, language assistance can be provided.

Alternative Lifestyles

The Bay Area is home to a wide variety of religions, political leaning, sexual orientations, and lifestyle choices. No matter who you are, or what your preference, San Francisco is one place in the United States that you will be unequivocally be welcomed. So if you're a vegan transgender lesbian left-handed albino midget Eskimo, you'll probably bump into others like you just outside the conference venue.

International Travel

Unfortunately, travel to the US has become more complicated in the years following 9/11. With the formation of the Department of Homeland Security, there has been an increase in paperwork, planning, and preparation for what was an otherwise simple trip for most foreigners. It is beyond the scope of this document to list all of the requirements for Visa-free travel to the United States, but the following 36 countries are members of the VWP (Visa Waiver Program):

> Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Regardless of country of origin, a valid passport will be required for entry into the United States. Please check available online resources if your home country does not appear in the list above about your individual travel requirements. All efforts will be made to assist those with special needs in validating their trip with the authorities.

BUDGET

Spreadsheet attached on the final page.

CONCLUSION

This proposal was submitted to the Plone Foundation on January 7th, 2011 by Tom Kapanka.

Estimated Attendees	300

COSTS	
Sprint Rooms*	675
Conference Rooms	19,900
A/V rental	1,960
Videography	9,000
Stage graphics	
Banners	200
Pint Glasses	825
Bags	345
Visual Identity (website)	3,000
Keynote speaker	500
Networking / Server WAG	1,000
Nametags	150
Keynote area rental	1,000
Party (WAG)	20,000
Transportation (WAG)	3,000
Total Costs	61,555

INCOME	
Sponsorship	20,000
Tickets	79,500
Net Income	99,500
PF Tax	14,925
Gross Income	84,575

Wiggle Room	23,020

ROOMZ					
SFSU Size	#	Daily	Conference	Training	Total
Large	2	2200	6600		
Medium	2	1800	5400	900	
Small	1	600	1800	600	
Room Totals	5	4600	13800	1500	19900
AV Smart Box	2	150	900		
Extension Cords	10	5	150		
Power Strips?	50	5	750		
AV Total		160	1800	0	1960

TICKIES			
Type	%	Rate	
Early Bird	50.00%	250	37,500
Student	5.00%	175	2,625
Speaker	5.00%	225	3,375
Normal	40.00%	300	36,000
Ticket Total	100%		79500