

## Virtual Fox Fest 2020

### Call for Speakers

You are invited to submit session proposals for Virtual Fox Fest 2020. Virtual Fox Fest, an online conference presenting the latest in Microsoft Visual FoxPro development techniques and interoperability with other technologies, is being organized by Geek Gatherings, a partnership of long-time Visual FoxPro MVPs Rick Schummer, Doug Hennig and Tamar E. Granor. This is the same team that has organized the Southwest Fox conference since 2007.

**Virtual Fox Fest** is primarily a Visual FoxPro conference. However, we welcome sessions on other technologies that can enhance VFP development and that improve development generally, as well as best practices in VFP development. We're also interested in sessions that offer Visual FoxPro developers a path forward.

Virtual Fox Fest 2020 will be held online on Thursday, October 15; Wednesday, October 21; and Tuesday, October 27. We've chosen three non-consecutive days in recognition of the difficulty of spending multiple days sitting in front of a screen learning. Sessions will be scheduled to make attendance possible across the Americas and some other parts of the world. After the event, videos of the sessions will be made publicly available.

We may choose to ask some speakers to pre-record their sessions rather than presenting them live, and we may choose to make some sessions available only online rather than presenting them during the three days of the conference.

In addition to any career benefits you may get from speaking, presenting at a conference is a way of contributing to your developer community. Every developer owes a debt to those who came before them, writing and speaking about software development. Preparing and delivering conference sessions is a way of paying that debt forward, as well as strengthening your community.

Session proposals are due no later than **June 1, 2020**. If you are interested in speaking at Virtual Fox Fest 2020, please read this entire document before submitting proposals. Send any questions to [speakers@geekgatherings.com](mailto:speakers@geekgatherings.com).

### Areas of Interest

We are particularly interested in topics that cover one or more of the following areas of interest:

- **Solidifying VFP Development**—These sessions should cover either a) VFP fundamentals, aimed at those newer to VFP, whether moving up from FP2.x or coming to VFP from other languages; b) VFP best practices, aimed at helping all VFP developers improve; or c) in-depth looks at aspects of VFP that some developers may not have mastered yet.

- **Taking Advantage of VFPX**—These sessions should showcase the projects in VFPX, providing attendees with enough information to put those projects to work for them. These sessions should be deep dives into specific VFPX projects. We will consider offering a single "What's new in VFPX?" session.
- **Extending VFP**—These sessions should look at ways to extend VFP's reach, by using it together with other products or by taking advantage of native extension capabilities, including working with SQL back-ends.
- **Moving Visual FoxPro Applications Forward**—These sessions should cover topics related to modernizing VFP applications as well as alternatives for new platforms and future application development. We are particularly interested in sessions about recent additions to the list of new platforms, such as X# and VFP Advanced.
- **Web and Mobile**: These sessions are aimed at developers who want to learn more about creating web and connected mobile applications.
- **Technology and Business for the Database Developer**—These sessions should look at tools, technologies and techniques to make life as a developer easier and more productive.

We assume that the audience for Virtual Fox Fest will be similar to that for Southwest Fox. However, with the reduced cost of attending this event, it is possible that it will attract attendees from around the world; if that happens, it may expand the range of experience of attendees.

Over the last few years, Southwest Fox attendees have specifically asked for more advanced sessions. There's a list of topics that prior attendees specifically asked for on our blog at <http://swfox.net/blog/2020/02/what-do-you-want-to-learn-2020-edition/>.

## Additional Information

Feel free to suggest other topics if they have a connection to VFP and you believe attendees will find them valuable.

We assume that most sessions will follow the usual VFP community template and run for 75 minutes, including time for Q&A at the end. However, if you have a topic that you feel is better suited to a shorter or longer timeslot, you are welcome to submit it. Include a note in your submission as to the session length you are proposing.

## Speaker's Responsibilities

Speakers will present one session and each session will be given only once.

Speakers must provide a brief bio and a digital photo for publicity purposes. The bio should be included with session proposals (see "[Submitting Proposals](#)" below). The photo can be submitted with session proposals, but must be submitted by **July 1, 2020**. If you have not previously spoken at a Geek Gatherings conference, please include your speaking experience in your bio.

Speakers must provide session notes (a "white paper") for each session. They may also provide slides. Where appropriate, code examples should be provided as well. **It is not acceptable to provide slides and no white paper for any session.** All materials are due no later than **Tuesday, September 29, 2020.**

Speakers are expected to rehearse their sessions prior to Virtual Fox Fest, so that the presentation runs smoothly.

As noted earlier in this document, Virtual Fox Fest will be scheduled on three non-consecutive days. If you know now that you are unavailable on one or two of those days, please add a note in your submissions, so we can ensure we have speakers available for all three dates.

Speakers are expected to abide by the [Code of Conduct](#) for the conference.

## Speaker's Rights

We will provide every speaker with free admission to the conference.

We will schedule sessions in a way that takes note of speakers' geographical locations, doing our best to schedule each speaker at a time that is during their normal waking hours.

Speakers own the copyright to their materials but grant us permission to include them in the downloads available to attendees. In addition, speakers grant us permission to make the video of their session publicly available following the conference. When presenting entirely new sessions, we prefer that speakers do not share their papers publicly until after the conference.

## Submitting Proposals

To be considered, submit your proposals at <https://geekgatherings.com/Submission> no later than 8 AM EDT on **Monday, June 1, 2020.** Each session proposal must include:

- 1) The session title
- 2) An abstract (100-200 words) describing the session.
- 3) A list of 4 or 5 bullet points finishing the sentence "Attendees will learn ..."
- 4) The track(s) into which the session fits.
- 5) The level(s) for the session: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced. This is the level for VFP developers, even if the session is about working with another technology. Think of the level (or levels) as fitting into the sentence "This session is appropriate for people who are at the <level> level with VFP."
- 6) Any prerequisites for the session.
- 7) Anything else you think we should know about this session.

Be sure to click Save in order to submit your proposal. You can make modifications to your personal information and proposals until 8 AM on June 1; we will not retrieve the stored data until then.

## The Selection Process

There is no shortage of able speakers in the developer community. That means that filling the speaker slots for this conference won't be hard, but choosing among all the qualified speakers will be. Among those who have spoken previously, preference will be given to those who have met their past obligations by submitting a full set of materials on time.

We consider the cultivation of new talent an important goal. Therefore, we encourage those who have not spoken at VFP conferences before to submit proposals. If you are unsure whether your topics are appropriate, feel free to contact us before the deadline to discuss them. Be aware, of course, that such discussions do not constitute a commitment on our part to choose you but are meant to help you submit stronger proposals.

Beyond that, the most important consideration will be the topics you propose and how they fit into the conference as a whole. You increase your chance of being selected by submitting at least three good topics. Entirely new topics will get priority, but we recognize that some topics can never grow stale and that it can be difficult to find new things to present for Visual FoxPro at this point in its life cycle. As always, we expect to receive more good proposals than available space, so if you are not chosen, please don't take it personally.

Initial speaker selection will be completed by Wednesday, June 24, 2020. Selected speakers will be notified by email no later than June 24, and asked to confirm their willingness to speak by Wednesday, July 1, 2020. Once all speaker slots have been filled, those not selected will be notified.

## Session Materials and Deadlines

While attendees learn a lot at conferences, the materials from the conference provide the lasting impact. As noted above, **session notes are not optional** as they offer the greatest value to attendees. However, we want to emphasize that session notes are not meant to be books or *the* definitive work on a topic. The notes should cover the material in the session and provide pointers to additional information. Helping people avoid common problems is helpful, too. For many topics, a paper of 15 to 20 pages is a reasonable goal.

In addition, we are providing all submission deadlines now so you can check them against your personal calendar before submitting proposals. If you cannot meet the deadlines, please do not submit proposals.

We are very serious about speaker obligations. Those who do not fulfill their obligations will not be invited to speak at future Geek Gatherings conferences.

## **Summary of Important Dates**

June 1, 2020: Session proposals due.

June 24, 2020: Speaker selection completed and selected speakers notified.

July 1, 2020: Acceptance of speaker invitation due. Any revisions to bios, abstracts and speaker photo due.

September 29, 2020: All session materials due.

October 15, 21, 27, 2020: Virtual Fox Fest 2020