

PKP OPEN CONFERENCE SYSTEM: HOW A PORTABLE, OPEN SOURCE CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CAN HELP TO RUN A CONFERENCE

LEONARDO LAZARTE; ANA CRISTINA S. MOREIRA

Department of Information Science and Documentation
University of Brasilia
Campus Universitário Darcy Ribeiro Brasília/DF – Brazil
llazarte@mat.unb.br; cristina@unb.br

The “Open Conference System”, OCS, is an open source, free, web publishing tool which helps in planning, organizing and managing a conference. It allowed us to experience the benefits of two important trends today: sharing knowledge and open source. EIPub2003 as well as this years’ EIPub2004 have been managed through this software.

OCS allows the creation of a conference web site, editing and disseminating calls for papers, submission of abstracts and full papers, manage the reviewing process, and help with the registration process.

The use of the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) standards of metadata makes possible the indexation and search of the conference papers, which are incorporated to a universal library of databases for scholarly and public use.

OCS defines three different types of users: Author, Reviewer and Administrator. Their identification through passwords grants security and reliability.

Authors can submit abstracts and papers, edit them, if necessary, and read reviewers’ suggestions for accepting the paper. Reviewers can read abstracts and papers assigned to them and write comments and recommendations to justify acceptance or rejection. The administrator sets up the conference website, defining appearance, logos, images, dates, reviewers, organizers, sponsors and related links. She or he can edit messages of acceptance or rejection, make backups, etc.

Being open source, OCS can be modified to adjust to special needs. In this workshop we will share our experience of using the software ‘as is’, in 2003, and with extensive modifications, in 2004.

This workshop should be mostly of direct interest to people planning on organizing a conference.

The first thing to address is the whole conference workflow. It is important to know the model on which OCS is built, in order to know how much your particular conference will depart from, or adapt to, this model.

The proposed structure follows these steps:

1. Defining an overview of the conference
2. Making available an updateable conference programme
3. Editing and disseminating a call for papers
4. Managing the paper submission process
5. Establishing a conference forum
6. Managing lists of authors, abstracts and papers

7. Guide to the registration process (not fully included on the package)
8. Including conference partners and sponsors
9. Establishing the conference schedule
10. Offering related links

In the workshop we suggest some steps which could help users in deciding to use the OCS, and how it will fit their needs:

1. Acknowledgement of the OCS workflow model.
2. Definition of your conference workflow.
3. Detecting where your workflow could follow OCS's, and where you will need adaptations.
4. Deciding on adopting or not OCS.
5. Defining technical support, and whether to run OCS locally or on the developers' site.
6. Localization, language issues.
7. Installation.
8. Documentation and developers' FAQs.
9. Customization.
10. Support.

We expect attendants to be actively involved in discussing issues which are relevant for their expected use of the system.