TECH FEST 2005

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report:

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
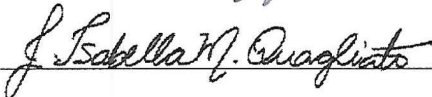
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Science

By

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Abstract:

A procedure for event organization is discussed. Various examples from the Tech Fest 2005 event at WPI are presented, along with knowledge gained from organizing that event. The procedure is targeted in particular for the Tech Fest 2006 event taking place in New York.

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1. Communication

The most important part of creating a team is communication. Being able to locate and communicate with team members to pass along information or to set up meetings is vital to accomplishing the task at hand.

1.1 Meetings

Early on, a standard meeting time should be set up. Determine a time that all people are available and meet at that time consistently. Having consistent meeting times will ensure regular attendance of team members, since it facilitates team members remembering meeting times, and will also provide them a deadline by which to have information and work completed. If meeting times change on a week to week basis, it will become increasingly likely that at least a few people might miss meetings, due to poor communication.

1.2 Mailing Lists

A mailing list is highly suggested especially in dealing with teams with a large number of members. For small teams, a mailing list may not be necessary. However, as the team grows, implementing a mailing list should be considered. This will ensure that all members of the team will receive information. If a mailing list is not implemented, a name may be left off of an e-mail, and that could prove disastrous to future meetings.

1.3 Others

There are other ways to set up communication among members of a team. One way that was often used by the Tech Fest 2005 organization team was Instant Messenger. Many online communication services offer chat rooms that users can easily set up, and

these are a great way to arrange quick, informal meetings to discuss issues. Cellular phones are also an efficient way of communication since they allow nearly instant communication among the members of a team, which is especially useful in the case of an emergency.

2. Background Research

Depending on the event, background research will vary in depth. For Tech Fest 2005, the project team researched other events (both music and non-music related) that have been set up in Alden Hall.

2.2 Know your audience

Determining your audience is an important step that should be tackled early on. If the desire is to attract professionals, the design of publicity and events would be approached differently than if the purpose was to attract, for instance, high school students. One must not only know one's audience, but also what will catch their attention. Tech Fest 2005 demonstrated the integration of music and technology, and was heavily geared toward choral conductors and vocal performers. That particular audience is accustomed to more traditional aspects of music and is wary of technology which interferes with their accustomed way of life. It is the organizers' job to familiarize themselves with these subtleties, and to present the material in a manner which is least intrusive to the target audience while still rousing their interest. It was also necessary to ensure that the material was presented so that even those with limited technological background would still understand the presentation.

2.3 Research similar events

The most important question to answer when organizing an event from scratch is, what should the event look like? To answer this question, it is necessary to research other events to see how they are organized. This includes nearly all aspects of the event, not just their final delivery. Research must be done regarding the means of registration available, the schedule of exhibits, programs, publicity and a number of other factors.

The best place to find this information is to find an organization which regularly organizes similar events. In the case of Tech Fest, previous music-oriented events sponsored by the American Choral Directors Association were investigated, via their web site and magazine, and used as a model. There is also much general information concerning event organization available on the Internet which, though nonspecific, should not be overlooked.

3. Publicity

Arguably one of the most important parts of organizing an event is getting the publicity. There is little point in having the event if no one is going to show up. The size of the event will dictate how long beforehand publicity should be sent out, but it is something that should be considered from the very beginning. Print publicity for Tech Fest was initially sent out approximately two months before the event, with publicity over other media added as the event date closed in. Being its first run, attendance was expected to be low. At a larger event, more publicity should be disseminated sooner.

3.1 Magazines

Putting advertisements in magazines which cater to the event is one of the best ways to get publicity. Tech Fest was meant for people interested in music and music technology, so advertising in the ACDA newsletter/magazine was an excellent way to reach a large portion of our target audience. While this form of advertisement can be the most expensive, it is arguably the best way to get information to those who are most likely to be interested.

To publish in a magazine, a cover letter must be drafted and sent in to the magazine's advertising representative. See the Sample Documents section for more information.

3.2 Newspapers

Locating local newspapers in which to advertise the event is a good way to reach the local population. Though local advertisements may not have as high a success rate as targeted magazine advertisements, they may attract those who are only mildly curious.

To publish in a newspaper, a cover letter must be drafted and sent in to the newspaper's advertising representative. See the Sample Documents section for more information.

3.3 Internet

3.3.1 Web sites

Web sites are today by far the most popular means of disseminating information, and for good reason. Providing a web site is a great way to decrease the amount of information needed on a hard copy advertisement, thus limiting its size and saving money. Advertisements need only provide enough information to grab someone's

attention, and to direct them to the web site for more information. The dynamic nature of a web site means that it can be updated and evolved as the event changes. Hard copies can become outdated, but web sites can be updated regularly to ensure accuracy. A web site should also provide a method for potential guests to contact with the event organizers (e.g. by providing an e-mail address).

3.3.2 Mailing Lists

An e-mail mailing list provides a simple way to contact a large target audience for free. Check for any useful existing mailing lists which may have been set up prior to the event; for example, the alumni mailing list at WPI. A little bit of research should reveal an existing mailing list reaching the target audience.

3.4 Radio

A short advertisement for the radio might catch the attention of some who otherwise would not have heard of the event. Though radio advertisements may mention a web site address, it is important to ensure that the address is pronounceable. Especially avoid "special" characters such as tildes and percent signs. If a dedicated domain name can not be purchased for the event or a short web address otherwise procured, look into companies such as CJB (http://www.cjb.net/) and DynDNS (http://www.dyndns.org/) which provide free domain redirection services.

Similarly to the magazine and newspaper advertisements, radio advertisements also require a cover letter. See the Sample Documents section for more information on the format needed for this type of cover letter.

3.5 Local Schools

Depending on the type of event, contacting local schools may be a desirable form of publicity. For Tech Fest, the music department of many local high schools and colleges in the Worcester area were contacted, since both students and professors of music were part of the target audience.

For contacting high schools, communicating over the phone is preferred since they receive large amounts of junk mail daily. However, it is acceptable to contact colleges via e-mail. It is suggested that a hard copy advertisement be sent if the party is interested.

4. Organization

The organization of the event should be nearly completed before advertisements are disseminated. Resources required for the event should be identified early on so that they may be procured without difficulty. Most importantly, the location of the event (such as a hall) must be booked early.

A list of necessary items should be kept throughout preparation. This list will likely expand and change as organizing the organization progresses, but it is important to keep track of all items that will be needed. This list should include necessities such as microphones, speakers, projectors, projection screens, televisions or monitors, synthesizers, keyboards, chairs, and music stands as well as minor items such flowers and other aesthetic details. It is also important to contact the guest speakers and inquire if they have any special requirements.

Actual setup of the event should occur the day of, or a few days before (depending on the size of the event), the event itself. This task will be insurmountable if tackled alone, so it is best to locate and hire a nearby service which can handle such details. WPI Plant Services is available to set up chairs, choral risers and other such items at WPI locations. Most large conference halls are similarly staffed. Contact their representatives early and often to coordinate what work needs to be done.

4.1 Getting everything in place

Know where everything goes. Have at the very least a rough layout of where everything belongs. This does not have to be a physical diagram if it is simple, but as things become more complex it would be wise to commit the plans to paper, if only for the simplicity of explaining the setup to those who will actually be setting it up.

Setup should be completed many hours before the event starts, allowing ample time to fine tune placement of the equipment required, and to make sure nothing is missed. During this time, signs should be set up around the building. These signs should point people towards important locations (such as the bathroom) and should also point to various exhibition locations, no matter how obvious the location may seem.

4.2 The Program

There are a number of different items which can be placed on a program, and they will vary event to event. There are however a few which should be included. Every program should have a title page, with the event name and any general information. It is also suggested that any hosts or sponsors are mentioned. The program should also include an Event Schedule, along with a short description of each event. Should event times overlap; the descriptions will allow attendees to decide which they would like to

see beforehand. If there are any guest speakers at the event, it is suggested that a short biography be placed in the program as well.

Another item that which may be included is a list of people or students involved in the event. This may be impractical depending on the size of the event, so good judgment must be used when deciding whether this information should be included.

5. Suggestions for Future Events

The biggest thing that stood out after the event was over did not actually seem all that important at the time, thus going to prove that every detail matters. Although there was a student sitting at the front desk next to a printer and a laptop, many people did not recognize this as a 'registration' place. It is highly suggested that a large, visible sign reading "Register for X here" be used.

Another improvement which could have been made concerned publicity. Though a number of magazines, newspapers and radio stations were contacted to publicize the event, no follow up contact, nor confirmation of the publication of the ads was made. The wiser course of action would have been to follow up a few weeks before the event to ensure the ads were still scheduled to be run.

6. Results of the Survey

Near the end of Tech Fest, attendees filled out a survey asking what they liked/disliked about the event, and what improvements could have been made. The survey was distributed during refreshments, so that people could take time while eating to fill it out.

By far the favorite exhibit at the event was the Virtual Orchestra presentation, which was not unexpected. The most often suggested improvements were to advertise more (many people did not know about the event more than a day in advance) and to smooth out the registration process.

7. Appendix

7.1 Sample Documents

Attached are a number of sample documents. These should be used as a reference not as an authoritative process on how to run your event.

IQP Meeting Minutes 3: This document is a sample of our notes during a typical meeting. All three team members kept notes, and then later we would formulate them into 'meeting minutes' to make sure that we all heard the same thing and did not miss any information.

Cover Letter Gazette: This is our cover letter to the Gazette magazine.

Tech Fest Event Program: This is our Event Program. It was a single sheet of paper, printed on both sides and folded in half.

Cover Letter for schools: This is a sample document we wrote up as a reference for contacting local schools.

Questionnaire: This is the questionnaire that we handed out during refreshments

IQP Meeting Minutes

Meeting 3 -- November 29, 2004

-Teresa Nakran – lecture

Poster
(Due December 15th)

1000 posters – ACDA (600 posters – 2 fold, 8 ½ by 11)
                 + Alumni (3-fold, on an envelope)

$30 non-members (ACDA)
$25 ACDA members
Free – WPI students with ID

Poster Layout:

Tech Fest 2004

Thursday, 17 March 2005
5PM-9PM

"Sponsored in part by the American Choral Director's Association and the WPI Men's Glee Club"

$25 ACDA members

$30 non-members

Free WPI community w/ ID

For more information contact Prof. Delorey
(508) 831-5051
Email: jfd@wpi.edu

Alden Hall, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

100 Institute Road, Worcester

www.wpi.edu/~techfest

Order:

Virtual Orchestra
Virtual Musician
Virtual Choir

Extended Vocal Techniques
Web-based Choral Library
Digital Music Stands

<u>Advertising:</u>

ACDA online & WPI alumni journal

Vocal:

- Janet Earle room or Spaulding
- Have two of each everything

Space

50-100 people at the event.
How do we get people in and out? Fit 50 to 100 people in Alden Hall?

To do's:

- Alden Hall dimensions (Space)
- Being writing report (Presentation every meeting from now on)
- Poster prices (budget)

Next Meeting: Monday December 6, 2004 @ 4:30pm

Cover Letter Gazette:

TO: Advertisement Director, John Doe
FROM: Tech Fest, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
RE: Tech Fest 2005 Announcement
DATE: Thursday, January 20, 2005

Please post this Public Service Announcement. Should you have any questions, contact Jane Doe at (555) 555-5555.

This is for immediate release.
Please send out by: Monday, February 21, 2005.
Please stop run on: Thursday, March 17, 2005.

Announcement:
On Thursday, March 17, 2005 Worcester Polytechnic Institute will be hosting Tech Fest 2005.

This event will be open to the general public, and will begin at 5:00 p.m. and conclude at 9:00 p.m. It will be a night showcasing technology and how it can be used to modify, create, and enhance music.

For more information, visit http://www.wpi.edu/~techfest/ or e-mail techfest@wpi.edu.

Thank you,

Jane Doe
Jack Doe
Jeff Doe

Patrick J.M. Quinn, Ph.D.

Professor and Department Head of Humanities and Arts at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Dr. Quinn's areas of research cover both American and British literature from about 1880 until roughly the end of World War II. While most of his work has looked at poetry, he is not averse at attempting to articulate something original about the novel on occasion.

He admits to having two areas of special expertise: the first is his work on the British novelist, poet, critic, and mythographer, Robert Graves. He fell in love with Graves' work while an undergraduate and have written about his work for over twenty years. He has published a book about his poetry, have edited two journals dedicated to his work as well as having edited a collection of critical essays concerning him. Dr. Quinn has organized three international conferences about his work, been the manager of his archive at St. John's College, Oxford, but most importantly, is the general editor of the twenty five volume Robert Graves Programme, which is republishing most of his work over a twelve year period.

Dr. Quinn's other area of expertise is the Literature of World War I. While most of his research has focused on the British war poets, lately he has been publishing on the American literary experience of the conflict. His last book, *The Conning of America*, allowed him to read a great many pieces of propaganda literature which should prove useful in a study of the occult and war literature he has planned.

Recently, he has been publishing articles on late Victorian literature comparing the similarities between English, French, and Italian Decadence. From this fruits of this investigation, he is contemplating writing a study on the largely overlooked American Decadent movement.

Teresa Marrin Nakra, Ph.D.

Dr. Teresa Marrin Nakra is a musician, conductor, inventor, and designer of new technologies for music performance. She holds Visiting Assistant Professorships in Music at both WPI and the Massachusetts College of Art. She holds both a Ph.D. and M.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's acclaimed Media Laboratory, where her mentors included Tod Machover, Rosalind Picard, John Harbison, and Marvin Minsky. She also holds a bachelor's degree with high honors in Music from Harvard University . She has received numerous distinctions for her academic work, including Research Fellowships from IBM, Motorola, and Interval Research Corporation.

As the Founder and Artistic Director of *Immersion Music* , Dr. Nakra has been bringing a high-tech interaction paradigm to classical and traditional music. Immersion Music has produced many live music events with digital enhancements, including "Orchestral Music at the Technological Frontier," a concert at Boston 's Symphony Hall that attracted 2000 attendees. Immersion Music has also developed a museum exhibit in collaboration with the Boston Children's Museum and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a Digital Salon series, and a Digital Conducting Laboratory at Arizona State University

Dr. Nakra was recently a Clifton Visiting Artist at Harvard University 's Office for the Arts. As a conductor of contemporary and classical music, she is the assistant conductor of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. She has been a featured performer of the Boston Cyberarts Festival, and has also performed in numerous venues with sensor-based electronic instruments. As the culmination of her extensive doctoral study with the "Conductor's Jacket," she presented a live public performance with Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Orchestra.

TECH FEST 2005

Thursday 17 March, 2005

5– 9PM

Alden Hall

Partially Sponsored by:
The American Choral Director's Association
&
The WPI Men's Glee Club Association

WPI

Event Schedule

Time	Event	Location
5:00 - 5:30	Registration	Front Hall
5:30 - 6:00	Digital Music Stands	Spaulding (In the basement)
6:00 - 6:15	Welcome and Introduction by Dr. Quinn	Great Hall
6:15 - 7:00	Demonstration of Virtual Musician by Dr. Nakra	Great Hall
7:00 - 7:30	Extended Vocal Techniques	Spaulding
7:30 - 8:00	Virtual Choir	Great Hall
8:00 - 8:30	Virtual Orchestra	Great Hall
8:30 - 9:00	Refreshments and Discussion	Janet Earl (In the basement)

Digital Music Stands

Experience the newest in technology for music storage and retrieval as displayed by MusicPad Pro, the digital music stand. Hear ensembles sing using the stands, and talk to representatives from the company about their product.

Demonstration of Virtual Musician by Dr. Nakra

As pressure is increasingly placed on musicians to perform 'live' as well as they did in the studio, there has been an understandable backlash against "lip synching" and the artists who are caught doing it. But what are the possible solutions to this situation? What is the value of doing anything "live" when it just sounds better on the CD?

For one thing, live performances need to be more dynamic for an increasingly well-educated mass market of savvy music consumers, who would rather download a song for 99 cents than spend $50-100 on a concert ticket.

Secondly, the powerful capabilities of computers to do real-time gesture recognition means that the highly produced studio sounds can again be placed in musicians' hands. Dr. Nakra will present a wide range of recent work in this area, including several technologies for performing artists. She will also demonstrate her own work in the area of multimedia enhancements for classical music, including live performances and interactive museum installations. More about these projects can be found at: www.immersionmusic.org

Extended Vocal Techniques

A live performance of movements from John Delorey's opera "Dedalus and Icarus." This piece was written as a teaching aid for singers and extended vocal techniques. Performers sing with themselves, and control musical events based on pitch and volume. There will be opportunities for interested members to try the techniques after the performance. Three movements - Trisagion, Invocation of the Chorus, The Minotaur.

Virtual Choir

Witness first hand as technology takes the art of song to a new level. Performing as some 20 voices of a 40 part motet entitled Spem in Alium, the hardware and software to empower the celebrated Virtual Orchestra have been tailored especially in effort to recreate a choir.

Virtual Orchestra

Come hear (and sing) in a performance of Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" (Movement I) accompanied by the Virtual Orchestra. The Virtual Orchestra, developed by Dr. David B. Smith of New York Technical College and Dr. Fred Bianchi of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, is the cutting edge technology that is used to enhance live performances. Using a combination of live and "virtual" players, each speaker in the "orchestra" reproduces a single instrument, to produce music that replicates the sound of a live performer. The conductor can control the overall sound mix with exact precision. Unlike pre-recorded accompaniment, small changes in tempo, pitch or volume can be easily effected, allowing the singers to interact with the music in a natural manner. This whole process is controlled by a bank of computerized equipment and sound modules contains high-resolution sound samples recorded from real instruments, and can re-create any music scored onto the computer as well as sound effects. The movement will be performed twice, so you may take the opportunity to inspect it from the audience and from the chorus.

Students Involved:

Joshua Anderson
Mario Angotti
Jeremiah Jinno
Eliot Dan Hariton
James Kazmierczak
Chris King
Gregory Meagher
John Paik
Isabella Quagliato
Matthew Racki
Sara Strecker

Cover Letter for schools:

HIGH SCHOOLS

Dear X,

       We are students from WPI working on a project called Tech Fest. It is a festival of Technology and Music. The evening will be spent showcasing how various technologies can be integrated to create new performances, or to enhance live performances. We thought that you and your students may be interested in attending. The event will take place at 5:00-9:00 p.m. on March 17, 2005. Any students accompanied by a faculty member have free admission, as does the faculty member. For more information (including a list of exhibits at the event), please visit http://www.wpi.edu/~techfest/

CONSORTIUM
Dear X,

       We are students from WPI working on a project called Tech Fest. It is a festival of Technology and Music. The evening will be spent showcasing how various technologies can be integrated to create new performances, or to enhance live performances. The event will take place at 5:00-9:00 p.m. on March 17, 2005. We thought that students and professors may be interested in attending. Admission for consortium students is free. For more information (including a list of exhibits at the event), please visit http://www.wpi.edu/~techfest/

WPI TechFest Questionnaire

Please help us improve next year's TechFest by filling out this short questionnaire!

1. There was enough information available prior to the event.   Yes   No   Unsure

2. There was enough time spent on each exhibition.   Yes   No   Unsure

3. I felt rushed when transitioning from one exhibit to another.   Yes   No   Unsure

4. The exhibits worked well together.   Yes   No   Unsure

5. I was left with many unanswered questions.   Yes   No   Unsure

6. This event helped me gain a better understanding of music technology.   Yes   No   Unsure

7. Overall, I enjoyed myself at this event.   Yes   No   Unsure

8. I would return next year for a similar event.   Yes   No   Unsure

9. I would enjoy seeing more commercial products at a future event.   Yes   No   Unsure

If you have any additional comments, please write them in this space. We appreciate your input!

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.2 Media

See attached DVD for videos of the event.