17

0wn the Con

Or How to Reuse Slides for 4 Straight Years

(Hint – we didn't use these slides the first year)

~~16~~ ~~15~~ ~~13~~ ~~12~~ ~~14~~ ~~11~~ ~~10~~ ~~9~~ ~~8~~ ~~7~~ ~~6~~ ~~5~~ ~~4~~

Organizational Structure

- ShmooCon Logistics, LLC
- Almost everything is planned via email, phone calls, and now the new norm - zoom.
- Planning for next year started….Last year?

Why Do We Do It?

New Slide!

- So many reasons
- But some of those reasons have changed over the years.
- Originally?
  - Wasn't really anything on the East Coast.
  - If they can do, we can probably do it.
  - Why not?
- Now?
  - Community Building
  - Further Discourse
  - Habit? Only half-joking…

- How do we keep it fresh…how do we stay motivated?
  - BECAUSE OF YOU.

Staff

- Roughly 90 (onsite) volunteers this year but also an army of general support
- We've had a lot of success in not visually delineating departments - same color shirts

  - Heidi and Bruce (Top level decisions, finances, sponsorship, staffing, etc)
  - Review Committee
  - Registration
  - Taping/Streaming
  - A/V Support
  - Security
  - Firetalks
  - Labs

  - Hack Fortress
  - Party
  - Photography
  - Press Reg
  - "Badge" Contest
  - Website Support
  - Graphics Support
  - The Potter Children and their significant others!

Hours and Hours

- Heidi
  - Aug/September - part time job
  - September thru Feb - full time job
  - March thru Aug - it just varies.
  - Best guess? 1000+ hours
- Bruce
  - Less than Heidi but certainly several hundreds of hours dedicated to the con
  - Best Guess? 400+ hours
- All other Volunteers
  - Leading up the con best guess - 1000+ combined hours
    - Includes things like bag stuffing, t-shirt rolling, Hack Fortress prep, badge contest prep, graphic design, ticket sales, reviewing talks, Labs prep, down to my kids moving boxes around my house every weekend and more.
  - During the con itself best guess - 1200+ hours
- Honestly ALL of these numbers are probably on the low side.
- If you haven't said thank you to a ShmooCon Staff member yet, please do.

Logistics/Logisitics

New Slide!

- Hotel
    - Contracts, A/V orders, BEOs, Meetings (although we mostly skip these anymore), Diagrams, Scheduling, Trash cans, etc.
- Sponsors
    - Invoicing, Communicating Expectations/Information, Swag
- SWAG
    - Selection/Testing, Attendees, Staff, Speaker
- Collateral
    - Print Materials (badges, banners, program, signs), T-shirts, etc.
- Marketing/Communications
    - Website, Twitter/Mastodon, Email, FB, Texts, etc.
- Program
    - Speakers/CFP - Program Committee, Talk Selection, Speaker Communication
    - Shmooze-A-Student, Labs, HF, Firetalks, T-shirt Charities, Liaison with outside events, etc.
- Ticket Sales
    - Managing different types of tickets - GA x 2, Non-Transferable x 2, Shmoozer, Student, Press, Events x 2, Speaker, Staff, Sponsor, Labs
    - GA - 3 Rounds, Number Crunching, Waitlist
- Volunteers 🤍
    - Recruiting(?), Training Sessions, Team Meetings, Communications
- Chez Potter
    - Storage Unit, Endless Wall of Boxes
    - Pre and Post Con Events - Prep parties, Truck Rental, Post-Con Debrief, Storage Unit Clean-up
    - Did we mention BOXES?

Conference Dates and Venue

- Date tends to float a bit year to year
  - Generally in January, sometimes Feb/Mar
  - January 12-14, 2024 - Your sneak peek into the future
- We like the Hilton
  - Lots of room
  - Keeps us all on one floor
  - Generally very easy to work with.
  - To be fair, we're a fairly easy event as far as things go.

CFP Stats (everything on this page is online)

- 169 Total Submissions - still down from our normal 200+ish
- Acceptance Rate = 26.6%
  - This changes based on number of talks, format, etc.
- 192 unique names on submissions (some submissions had more than one author).
- Using dubious, best guess (mostly based on bios, plus a bit of google) methods:
  - 156 He/Him
  - 31 She/Her
  - 5 Other or Unknown
- Talks Submitted Per Track (some talks submitted to multiple tracks):

  - OTM: 51
  - Belay It: 27
  - Belay It 20: 24
  - Bring It On: 57
  - Bring It On 20: 48
  - Build It: 30
  - Build It 20: 24
  - Fast and Furious: 23

- 54 speakers this year (not including closing plenary), 40 are first timers at ShmooCon, 8 have never spoken at a major conference before

CFP Stats, cont'd.

- Review Process
  - Submissions received via OpenConf
  - Generally between 15-20 people on review committee
  - Goal = each submission have 4+ reviews from active reviewers
  - Talks are "scored" using basic system from 1-6 (hell no to hell yes), in addition reviewers leave comments explaining decision
  - Once reviews are done, Heidi generally takes first pass at line up and then works with Bruce/Ben/Jon to flush it out. Banter occurs.
- Talks are not just chosen based on score. Track/topic balance, etc are also a big part.

- What other info would you like to see here?

How to Hack Selection

- FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!
    - We ask for certain information in a certain order - don't ignore this.
    - Don't just send us your slides or a white paper, it's not what we asked for.
- More Tips:
    - Detailed descriptions should be LONGER than your abstract.
    - When appropriate reference prior art and the work of others in this space.
    - No Teasers - Explain your ideas and why they are relevant to the infosec/ security community. Don't leave the review committee guessing.
- And yes
    - Spelling counts as does capitalization, complete sentences, you get the idea… (do not look at these slides as an example)

Ticket Sales

- Process
  - Landing server that soaks up all the F5's
  - Manual go live
  - Reservation process is separate from payment
  - Manual review of reservations before payment links are sent
- Why do we choose to do it this way
  - Privacy
  - More control/visibility
  - Cost

Ticket Sales Stats

- Cart is holding strong - Using AWS for everything.
- 1500 tickets were held in a total of 20.6 seconds over three rounds
  - If we include time for waitlist to fill up (our technical "sold out" indicator) total time was **22.76** seconds
- Round One – 310 reservations were for 2 tickets, 30 were for one.
- Round Two – 226 reservations were for 2 tickets, 48 were for one.
- Round Three - 159 reservations were for 2 tickets, 32 were for one.
- 667 Unique IPs
  - IPs with 1-2 transactions – 652
  - IPs with 3+ transactions – 15
- 703 Unique Email Addresses
  - 616 purchased in one round
  - 74 purchased in two rounds
  - 13 purchased in all three rounds
- 73 people (total from all 3 rounds) got tickets off the waiting list

Ticket Sales Stats, cont'd

- Shenanigans?
  - Not to the extent that people think but sure
  - We check each round before opening it up to purchasing
  - Will revoke tickets if we see anything that really indicates foul play

Second Hand Sales (for Profit) - Not the same issue it used to be. Thank you.

- We don't control what people do with their tickets
  - Easier for everyone
  - But….
- Re. eBay or other 2nd hand sales - You should know that we:
  - Won't get involved
  - You accept a certain amount of risk
  - We get a bit cranky about folks doing it for profit
- Thankfully the "for profit" category has gone way down, mostly due to community policing itself. Thank you.
- ShmooCon does run a waitlist
  - Only opens after last round of sales
  - One ticket per person on the list
  - People with extra tickets let us know and we pair folks up
  - Payment is handled between buyer/seller, but we will invalidate and issue a new ticket (we will only do this for tickets sold through waitlist)

Ch..Ch..Changes Over the Years

- Size: 300, 600, 900, 1200….2200
- Tracks
  - Build It, Break It, BoF It: 2005-2012
  - OTM, Build It, Belay It, Bring It On: 2012-2017
  - OTM, Build It, Belay It, Bring It On (20/50 minutes): 2018-2019
  - OTM, Build It, Belay It, Bring It On (20/50 minutes), FNF: 2022-now
    - 2022 - Off year, single track, OTM 50/20, FNF
- Keynotes - stopped during those in 2019. With no disrespect to previous keynotes, a lot of work with not a lot of additional benefit to the audience.
- Ticket Sales
  - Lots of changes over the years: paypal, moose cluster (authorize.net), to what we are running now.
- Other Program Changes
  - Shmooze- A-Student: 2013?
  - ShmooCon Labs: Started accepting attendees in 2007
  - Saturday Night: Offsite, Onsite, Untz, No Untz
- Content
  - Always posted content later for free
  - One of the first cons of this type to stream talks for free (not a choice all cons make) - 2010?
  - UStream, Livestream, Twitch
  - Current Equipment: Canon XA40s, ATEM Mini Extreme ISO (3000s - inside joke), dedicated pcs, etc.
- Technology
  - Sometimes we keep up, sometimes we are behind (cost of replacing hardware/software) - those reg boxes for example, we used G3 mac minis for far longer than we should have.

New Slide!

Size

- Why do we stay the same size?
  - Main reason - Preserve the feel of the con
    - Beneficial for volunteers and attendees
  - Other logistical issues (or preferences rather)
    - At this size we fit into a single 26' truck, for example.
  - And really? Because we want to…

Who is actually at ShmooCon?

- 86 staff
- 54 speakers
- 9 (registered) Press
- Attendees
  - 1665 General admission
  - 213 Sponsor
  - 29 Event
  - 47 Shmoozer
  - 64 Student
- Total = 2168

Attendees

- 2013 out 2163 of in 2023
    - 1663 out of 2003 in 2002
    - 0 out of 0 in 2021
    - 2036 out of 2170 in 2020
    - 2072 out of 2179 in 2019
    - 2100 out of 2168 in 2018
    - 2017 out of 2138 in 2017
    - 2021 out of 2160 in 2016
    - 1923 out of 2003 in 2015
    - 1920 out of 2016 in 2014
    - 1610 out of 1662 in 2013
    - 1399 out of 1446 in 2012
    - ~1170 out of 1423 in 2010 (snow)
    - 1287 checked in for 2009 with roughly the same ticket count
- Above data is at the time of the 0wn the Con presentation (Saturday or Sunday depending on year)

Sponsors

- 43 Sponsors (including labs)
  - 6 Levels
    - Platinum/Gold/Silver/No Table/Bronze/Friendship
    - Bronze level sponsorships reserved for small biz/groups less than 3 years old
  - Limited number of each level available
  - Labs sponsorship is separate - 6 labs sponsors this year
- We continue to push the sponsors to do something different
  - Both for their benefit and your benefit
  - We want sponsor involvement to be a good thing – not a detraction or distraction
- Also might be the only Hacker Con with a chocolate sponsor?

In $$$ In

- Quick Math, Rounded Numbers, Mostly correct, but…
  - Sponsorship funds = 224k
  - Ticket Sales = 303k
  - Total Funds Generated = 527k

Out $$$ Out
(Again rounded numbers - not perfect, some guesses, but pretty close-ish)

- Hotel Related Costs
  - Internet - 10.5k
  - Encore (hotel a/v, power) - 47k
  - Staff Rooms - 15k?
  - Food/Bev - 9k?
- Rental Items
  - Radios - 1.6k
  - Trucks - 1.5k
  - Overnight Security - 1k
- Gear Purchased
  - Laptops, cameras, soundboards, etc. - 19k
  - Games - .4k
- Printed Materials
  - Programs - 9.2k
  - Banners - .6k
  - Foam Core Signs - .7k
  - Staff Cards - .6k
  - Other (Press badges, etc) - .3k
- Stipends/Honorariums
  - Student - 12.8k
  - Speaker - 1k
- Swag
  - Badges - 8.5k
  - Bags - 22.5k

- ShmooBalls - 5.2k
- Attendee Swag (pens, lanyards, etc) - 11.5k
- Student Swag - .8k
- Labs swag - .6k
- Staff/Speaker swag - 5k
- Shirts - 9.6k
- Misc - Con
  - Prep (security training, bag stuffing, etc) - 2k
  - Supplies (gaff/packing tape, sharpies, etc) - .7k
  - Misc Other/Expenses during con - 5k
- Fees
  - Storage Unit - 7.6k
  - Event Insurance - 1.3k
  - Services (AWS, Adobe, Office, WP, cell, etc) - 10k
  - CC Processing Fees - 10.3k
  - Taxes - 88k
- Travel
  - Flights/Hotel/Tickets - 1.2k
  - Def Con - 2k
  - Sponsorship/Marketing - 2k
- PPE
  - Masks, Hand Sanitizer, Wipes, etc - .2k
- Things I didn't remember
  - ?k

So There's Money Leftover

- Varies from year to year
- Having a buffer is nice

What else do you want to see in 0wn the Con?

- We have added new information over the years, but do you want more?

Feedback

- We really do read it all
- We try to respond to each email
- Positive feedback feels good, but ideas, suggestions, and constructive remarks help us build a better con