

# Conferences for Beginners

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version 3.0, OSCON 2009

# ~~Conferences~~ OSCON for Beginners

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# About Me

- Lead Developer at Synacor, Inc.
- President, Perl Foundation
- Organized YAPC 2004
- Attending OSCON since 2002

# First Impressions

- My experience was with conferences like Gartner
- Professional
- Formal
- Around 2000, many people still in suits

# First Impressions

- Then I came to OSCON.
- San Diego, 2002.
- Perl Testing Tutorial
- [http://conferences.oreillyn.net/cs/os2002/view/e\\_sess/2530](http://conferences.oreillyn.net/cs/os2002/view/e_sess/2530).

# First Impressions

- First testing tutorial
- Uses the restroom...
- ...with his mic on
- Author of a ton of Perl modules
- Including the Testing modules in the talk



Photo by Ricardo Signes, 2004

# First Impressions

- Michael Schwern
- How To Lie Like A Geek
- 2:35pm Thursday,  
07/23/2009



Photo by Ricardo Signes, 2004

# First Impressions

- Wednesday comes
- Official opening of the conference
- Full room full of people

# First Impressions

- This guy walks on stage
- He's the co-chair of the conference

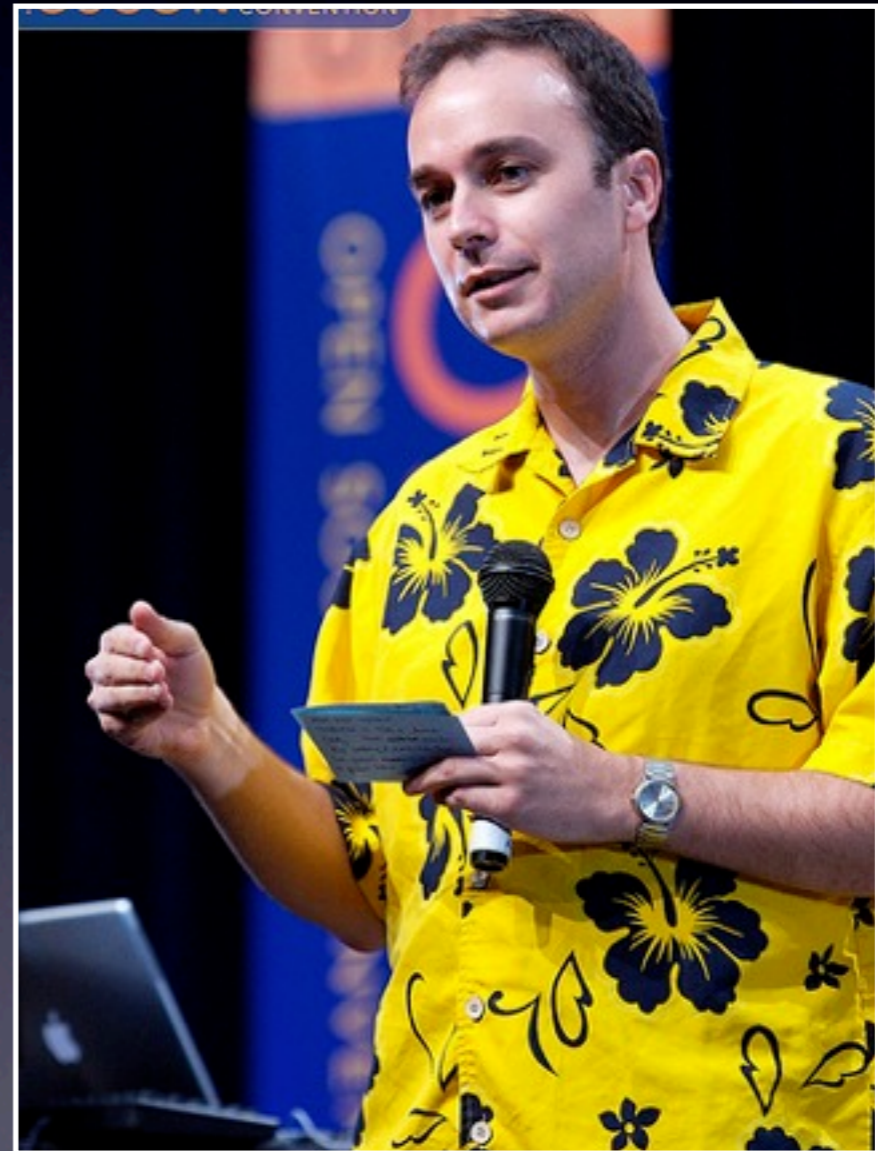


Photo by James Duncan  
Davidson

# First Impressions

- Nat Torkington
- OSCON Chair for Years
- "Perl Cookbook" author
- O'Reilly Radar blogger

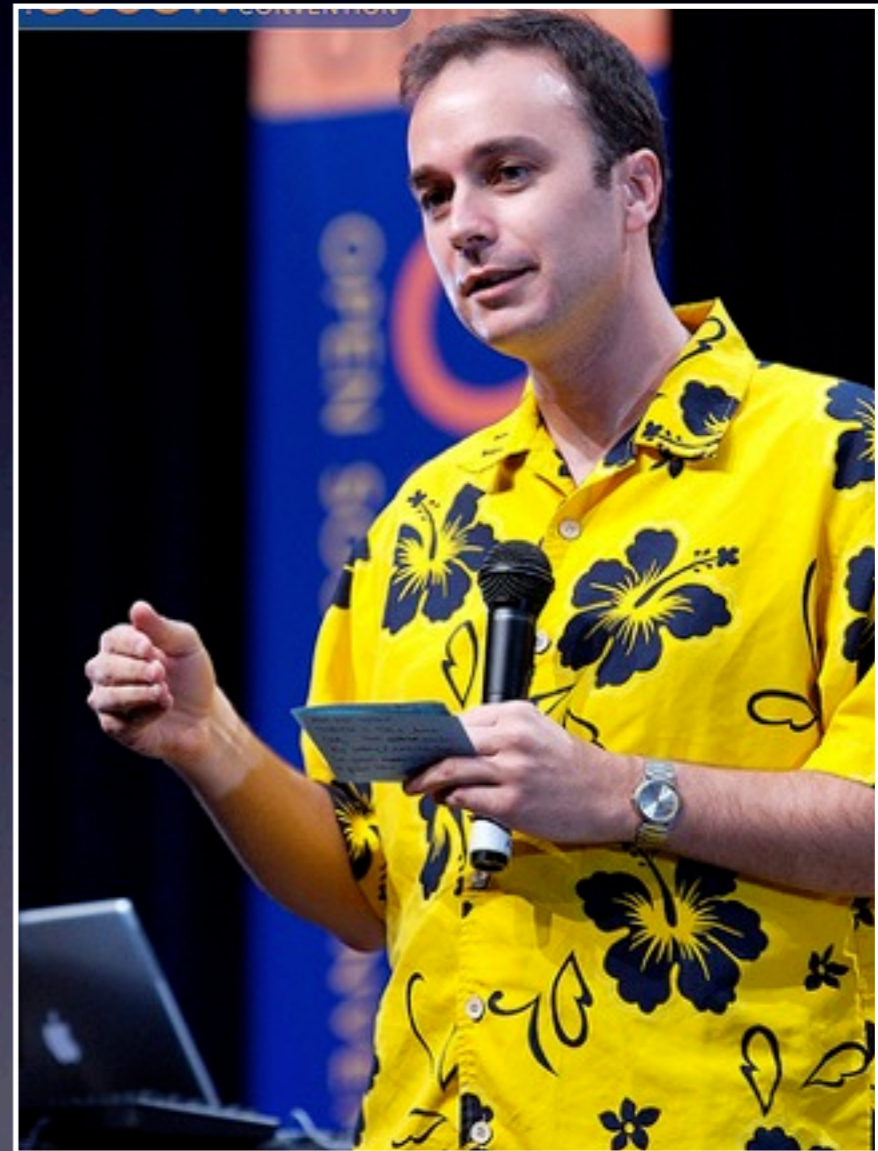


Photo by James Duncan  
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# First Impressions

- Not what you might expect.
- Appearances can be deceiving.
- “Your eyes can deceive you. Don’t trust them.”
  - Obi-Wan Kenobi

# Conference Experience

- Get the most out of your time here
- The days go by fast
- Sleep when you get home

Get what you need

# The Thirds

- One part each of stuff...
  - you **need** to learn
  - you think is **interesting**
  - that's **new** to you

The hand that  
feeds you

# Why You're Here

- **Justify** the conference cost
- **Five things** your company can use today

# Why You're Here

- Talk to an open source programmer
  - **fix** a bug
  - **explain** a feature
  - **describe** how you use their code

# Why You're Here

- **Meet** someone who can...
  - help you now
  - help you later
- Make **business** or **sales** contacts

# More First Impressions

# More First Impressions

- Is everyone using a Powerbook (MacBook)?
- Does everyone have an iPhone?

# More First Impressions

- Is anyone actually listening to the talks?
- Are people really IRC-ing with the person sitting right next to them?
- Did someone just tweet about the session I'm sitting in?
- Why did everyone laugh at the same time?
- Did that presenter just commit code live?

# Network Precautions

# Network Precautions

- Wireless networks are insecure
  - Use encrypted protocol for passwords (VPN, https...)
  - Techies sniff just because they can

# Network Precautions

- Bonjour / Rendezvous may be on automatically
- Do you really want to share your iTunes?
- Network users may connect to your machine
- May not be part of the conference

# Using the network

- Internet Relay Chat (IRC)
- irc.freenode.net
  - #oscon
- Blogs
  - OSCON News and Coverage Page
  - <http://blogsearch.google.com/>

# Your Schedule

- OSCON site lets you select talks
- View your schedule
- Share your schedule

# Hallway Track

- The good stuff happens outside the sessions
  - Meet new people
  - How to Schmooze - <http://onlamp.com/lpt/a/5989>

# Session etiquette

- Turn off noisy things...
  - phones
  - laptop sounds
  - side conversations
- Tune in

# Session etiquette

- Don't hog the Q & A time
  - take longer discussions to the hallway track
  - great chance to meet the speaker

# Evaluations

- Rate the sessions at the OSCON site
- Offer comments
- Rate the overall conference
- Your feedback matters

# Speaker etiquette

- With speakers...
  - don't hog their time
  - let them set up in peace
  - take into account sleep deprivation
  - remember they have things to do too
  - [http://stephengoldin.com/pro\\_etiquette.html](http://stephengoldin.com/pro_etiquette.html)

# New project cooling off period

# Reality Distortion Field

- Conferences are exciting
- Proximity breeds hubris
- People form groups
- Groups make plans
- Someone puts up a wiki
- Someone creates a schema

# Reality Distortion Field

- Everyone goes back to reality on Monday

No promises

# After the conference

- Email the people you met (but give them a chance to recover)
  - Blog about what you did,
  - what you liked,
  - who you met
- Tell your boss how much money the conference saved the company

# Be The Conference

- You do cool things with open source
- Submit a lightning talk this year:  
[justanotherperlhacker.org](http://justanotherperlhacker.org)
- Submit a full talk next year

Enjoy the conference!