

THATCamp Organizers' Handbook
Rebecca Onion, Amanda French

Creative Commons - BY -- 2012

Table of Contents

The Big Picture	1
Run through the checklists	1
First Things First	4
Register a new THATCamp	4
Set a date	6
Arrange a space	8
Make a budget	10
Tell the World	13
Build a website	13
Design a logo	17
Publicize the event	20
Accept registrations	23
Set the Stage	26
Beef up your technology	26
Plan workshops	27
During Your THATCamp	31
Schedule sessions	31
Afterwards	35
Evaluate how it went	35

The Big Picture

Run through the checklists



In brief

Here's a set of handy checklists for things you should probably make sure you've arranged for your THATCamp, broken down by time frame.

THATCamp Checklists

Two to four months beforehand

- Design a [logo](#)
- Build [your website](#)
- Arrange a [date](#) and a [space](#)
- Arrange for coffee, food, [tech such as wi-fi and projectors](#), and swag such as t-shirts based on your [budget](#)
- Plan [workshops](#)
- [Publicize](#) the event
- Begin accepting [registrations](#)

One month beforehand checklist



- Make sure all registered participants have user accounts on the website
- Make sure you have created a Participants page such as bayarea2011.thatcamp.org/attendees
- Make sure you have published a blank [schedule](#) grid with time slots and rooms to the website, perhaps by embedding a Google Docs spreadsheet (such as our [sample](#))
- Make sure you have published descriptions of any workshops you are running with the instructor's name, the difficulty level or any pre-requisite skills, and any required accounts or software
- If necessary, arrange transportation for people from their hotels to the THATCamp venue
- Order swag (t-shirts, tote bags, etc.) if you are providing it

Two weeks beforehand checklist

- Remind participants to bring a laptop (not an iPad or other tablet), to update their profiles, and to [post session ideas](#), along with any other information they need to know
- Make reservations at a nearby pub or restaurant for post-unconference gatherings (for day 1, expect 50% of attendees, for day 2, expect 10%-25% of attendees)
- Devise a method for letting people know how to connect to the wi-fi, either by posting the info prominently in a common area or by including it on the back of each participant's badge
- Decide whether you will ask for donations from participants, and if so, figure out a method for collecting them (PayPal, pass the hat afterward, optional registration fee when people pick up their badges, etc.)
- Plan for what to do with any uneaten food, such as donating it to a local food bank
- Print [badges](#) (you can also wait until the day before) or make sure you have blank name tags and pens

During and after checklist

- The day before or on the first morning, review the space to make sure that chairs, tables, power strips, projectors, and signs are all present and in order
- The day before or on the first morning, make sure that the registration table is set up with badges, swag, and any office supplies participants will need for the scheduling
- The day before or on the first morning, make sure that everything needed for voting on proposals (if you choose to do that) and running the [scheduling](#) is set up
- Ask for donations, if you have planned to
- Ask participants to fill out a brief [evaluation](#) (only two fields required!)

People and things checklist

- Someone to make introductory remarks and run the scheduling session
 - Printouts of session proposals
 - A whiteboard
 - Blank paper
 - Markers



- Tape
- Stickers
- Someone to fill in the schedule and publish it to the website
 - A blank schedule on the website with time slots and rooms
 - Someone to run the registration table
 - Table and chairs
 - Badges
 - Swag
 - Brochures / information
- Someone in charge of tech support
 - Extra routers
 - Power strips
 - Extension cords
 - Projectors
 - User accounts
 - Dongles
- Someone to post signs
 - Signs directing people to parking
 - Signs directing people to the building
 - Signs directing people to rooms

First Things First Register a new THATCamp



In brief

If you are thinking of hosting a THATCamp in your city or region, please fill out the registration form linked to below with the **name of your THATCamp**, the **name of the chief organizer**, an **email address**, a **mailing address**, and whether you plan to hold [workshops](#). (All other fields are optional.) This will enable us to publicize your THATCamp and to give you advice and technical help.

[Register a new THATCamp](#)

Terms of registration

The name “THATCamp” is trademarked by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, so we ask you to agree to just a few easy terms before using the name. These terms, which are aimed at making sure that THATCamp remains true to its founding principles of participatory openness, are as follows:

I agree that our THATCamp will be . . .

- **FREE or CHEAP** to attend (registration fees of up to \$30 USD are fine)
- **OPEN** to anyone who wishes to apply or register (no institutional, professional, or rank restrictions)
- **INFORMAL** and participatory (no presentations, papers, or demos longer than 5 minutes with the possible exception of skills training workshops, though these too should be hands-on if possible)
- **PUBLIC** on the open web (sessions can be blogged, twittered, photographed, recorded, and posted)
- **SELF-ORGANIZING** (no program committee: all participants are given a chance to help set the agenda, either before or during the unconference)

If you have an annual THATCamp, please do register each separate yearly instance.

Benefits of registration

There are two chief benefits of registration. First, it allows us to provide you with help and support and advice and even a hosted website. Second, it allows us to publicize your THATCamp on our Twitter feed, newsletter, and website, all of which have large audiences.

Once you register, your THATCamp will appear in [the spreadsheet listing all past and planned THATCamps](#) (partly displayed below — be sure to scroll right), and you will be given edit privileges to said spreadsheet. If you do not know all the necessary details, such as the dates, you can add them later. Keeping the registry up to date with the details of your THATCamp will help the THATCamp Coordinator provide accurate information in publicity materials.

The THATCamp Coordinator will add the chief organizer to the THATCamp Counselors e-mail list (a listserv for THATCamp organizers) and will give the organizer administrative privileges to the [THATCamp Calendar](#) and the [THATCamp Map](#).

Set a date



In brief

Choose a [space](#) before you set a date. THATCamps are usually **one day** long and usually happen **on or near a weekend**.

Best times and lengths for a THATCamp

If you expect that many academics will attend your THATCamp, you might want to think about **not** having it in **late April / eMay** or in **late November / December**, because these are busy times for universities on the semester system. THATCamps held at these times have found that they have had a higher rate of last-minute cancellations than other THATCamps.

The original THATCamp was (and remains) one and a half days long: a full day on Saturday and a half-day on Sunday. As local THATCamps have proliferated, however, some organizers have found that **a single day** works better, because it means that fewer people will need to reserve a hotel room, which keeps travel costs low. Still, other organizers have said that an extra half-day provides much-needed time for additional sessions and, sometimes, reflection. It's usually not a good idea to have a THATCamp that lasts longer than a day and a half, for the simple reason that [THATCamp is tiring](#). “My brain is fried” (in a good way!) is a common refrain from participants near the end of a THATCamp.

One important exception to the above “no longer than a day and a half” suggestion is for a [workshops](#): organizers are increasingly saying that having a separate day dedicated to workshops (as opposed to unconference sessions) has been a good idea. See, for instance, [THATCamp Virginia's dedicated workshop day](#), which took place before an additional day and a half of unconferecing. Some workshops have run concurrently with unconference sessions, however, also with good success: see for instance [THATCamp New England's schedule](#) with workshops incorporated. (Note that many participants said in the evaluations that they'd have preferred a separate day devoted to training, however.)

Arrange a space



In brief

The ideal space for a THATCamp is **free**, big enough for **75-100 people**, able to accommodate **breakout sessions** for four to five groups of 15-20 people each, and equipped for and with **technology**.

Cost

The high prices asked by hotels and conference centers are a big reason that many conferences charge such [high registration fees](#). Saving money on meeting space is therefore a pretty high priority for THATCamps, which charge no registration fees at all. If you're organizing a THATCamp because you work with technology and the humanities, your employer might well be willing to provide THATCamp meeting space for free. Universities and colleges have museums, libraries, institutes, and centers that are great places to hold a THATCamp, and indeed many THATCamps organized by academics have been held in the groves of academe. [Humanities centers](#) and [digital humanities centers](#) are particularly appropriate meeting places, and such centers are located throughout the U.S. and Europe.

However, because THATCamp is for everyone, not just academics, universities and colleges are by no means the only places to hold a THATCamp. Public museums, public libraries, and technology companies often have terrific meeting spaces, and these organizations are very likely to have people who are interested in technology and the humanities. Rather than [sponsoring](#) your THATCamp with money, they might be very willing to sponsor your THATCamp with space.

Size

We recommend that your space have one large room where everyone can gather for introductions and agenda-setting, plus four or five smaller rooms for individual sessions. If you have only one large room, it should probably at least have movable chairs so that people can get together in small groups.

Technology

If possible, the space should also have such amenities as whiteboards or chalkboards (crucial for agenda-setting), projectors, plenty of power outlets, and wireless Internet access.

Examples

Some THATCamp spaces:

- [The Center for History and New Media](#) at George Mason University — [THATCamp Prime](#)
- [Automatic headquarters](#) — [THATCamp Bay Area](#)
- Aboard a boat on the Seine [La Baleine Blanche](#) — [THATCamp Paris](#), pictured above
- [The Simpson Humanities Center](#) at the University of Washington — [THATCamp Pacific Northwest](#)

Make a budget



In brief

The amount we usually suggest you budget for a THATCamp is about **\$4000** for **100 people** (\$40 per person), but, as you can see from the past THATCamp budgets below, you can hold a THATCamp for even less than that if you like if you eliminate t-shirts and possibly even food. THATCamps are cheap and informal by design; often people don't mind buying their own lunch. The biggest cost is usually the food, unless you're not able to find free [space](#). (Hotels and conference centers are expensive; try to find a university.) If you ask for donations from participants, you can usually expect about 70% of the participants to donate \$20 apiece (for 75 attendees, expect to make \$20 from 52 participants, i.e., about \$1050 — usually enough to cover the t-shirts). Don't forget to plan for a 15% cancellation rate.

Sample budgets

THATCamp Austin 2009 (50 people, 1/2 day, held at University of Texas at Austin)

T-Shirts: \$490

Pizza: \$300

Office supplies, web hosting, postage: \$55

TOTAL: \$845

THATCamp CHNM 2010 (85 people, 1.5 days, held at George Mason University)

T-shirts (103): \$1050

Catering (Panera – Breakfast x 2; Lunch x 1): \$1657.46
Costco: \$131.27
Badges (including lanyards): \$110
TOTAL: \$2948.73

THATCamp Bay Area 2010 (75 people, 1.5 days, held at Automattic headquarters)

Credit Card Processing: \$133.21
Domain name registration: \$15.17
Venue Cleaning: \$320
Catering: \$1678.89
Sat night (social): \$219.45
Nametags: \$45.87
T shirts: \$1200.08
Event Insurance: \$297.67
Supplies/misc expenses: \$67.62
TOTAL: \$3,977.96

Be sure to read Jon Voss's marvelous "[Behind the Scenes Look at Organizing a THATCamp.](#)"

THATCamp Columbus 2010 (55 people, 1.5 days, held at Columbus State Community College)

Food: \$1800
Shirts: \$618.18
Stickers: \$260
Badges: \$32.50
Other Supplies: \$60
TOTAL: \$2770.68

THATCamp Publishing 2011 (70 people, 1 day, held at Hyatt Regency, Baltimore, MD)

T-shirts: \$838.15
Hyatt room rental: \$500.00
Hyatt A/V: \$788.18
Hyatt wi-fi: \$258.30
Hyatt breakfast: \$3,031.34
TOTAL: \$5,415.97

THATCamp New England 2011 (110 people, 1.5 days, held at Brandeis University)

T-shirts: \$785.00
Brandeis University – food, custodial, A/V, parking: \$2,500.00
Graduate assistant: \$300.00
Dinner for organizers and workshop instructors: \$200.00
TOTAL: \$3,785.00

THATCamp CHNM 2011 (125 people, 2.5 days, held at George Mason University)

T-shirts: \$1250

Catering (Sodexo – Breakfast x 3, Lunch x 2): \$2750

Badges & lanyards for 125: \$150

Sundries / CostCo: \$100

TOTAL: \$4250

THATCamp Iowa City 2012 (87 people, 1.5 days, held at the University of Iowa)

Boxed lunches for Saturday and Sunday: \$1687.20

THATCamp travel mugs for participants: \$475.06

Coffee and tea for Saturday and Sunday: \$470.00

Reception at the Airliner: \$188.50

Hotel expenses for photographer and videographer Robin Davis: \$244.00

Snack trays for Friday and Saturday afternoons: \$201.04

Name cards and other office supplies: \$109.99

50 Posters: \$62.00

Parking: \$7.50

TOTAL: \$3,519.29

THATCamp CHNM 2012 (150 people, 2.5 days, held at George Mason University)

T-shirts: \$1293.55

Bags: \$761.25

Food and drink (Panera – breakfast x 3, lunch x 2): \$4434.11

TOTAL: \$6488.91

Tell the World Build a website



In brief

It's important to create some kind of space where online conversation and collaboration can happen before, during, and after a THATCamp. We offer **hosted THATCamp websites** here on <http://thatcamp.org>, but you can also build a THATCamp website with WordPress **on your own server** or you can use a commercial third-party service such as Tumblr, TypePad.com, or WordPress.com.

What should be on the website

- A prominent contact page and/or e-mail address so that visitors can contact you with questions
- The date of your THATCamp and other relevant dates, including when applications close and when notifications will be sent
- An About page explaining THATCamp
- Information about how to register or apply, including the deadline for applying or registering
- The date by which people can expect to know whether they've been accepted (many people need to know at least 6 weeks prior in order to make arrangements and/or get institutional funding)
- A blank schedule — see the page on [scheduling](#) for more on this
- Information about the organizers and sponsors of your THATCamp
- A blog, wiki, Twitter feed, or other forum(s) where participants and observers can communicate and work with one another
- A “Campers” page listing all THATCamp participants, who should all be users on the site
- Travel information, including directions to your THATCamp and recommended hotels

- A description of your workshops (if any), including titles, descriptions, instructor names (preferably linked to profiles), and any prerequisite knowledge (this information can be posted as soon as you have it)
- Times, dates, and descriptions of any planned social events

Hosted THATCamp websites

We run WordPress Multisite here on thatcamp.org, which enables us to offer you a quick and easy THATCamp website on our own server. To get a hosted site on thatcamp.org, indicate that you would like one when you sign up on the [registry](#) or write info@thatcamp.org. Features of hosted THATCamp sites include

- Pre-installed plugins that enable common THATCamp tasks
- Customized THATCamp registration
- Pre-installed, customizable themes developed specifically for THATCamps
- Support for languages other than English (choose your language in “Settings → General”)
- The fastest and easiest way to make a THATCamp website
- Assurance that your THATCamp site will be backed up and maintained by the Center for History and New Media

Stand-alone THATCamp websites

Commercial services such as [Tumblr](#), [Zoho Wiki](#), or [PB Works wikis](#) might well be sufficient to enable the kind of online interaction that’s crucial to a THATCamp. Most THATCamp websites have been built with WordPress, however, which is an open source blogging and website content management software that we love.

If you build your own THATCamp site using WordPress, you’ll have more control over its look, feel, and functionality, but you’ll probably spend more time on the website than you would have if you’d chosen the hosted option. Nevertheless, to make it as easy as possible for you to build your own website, we offer some instructions and materials below. Here’s what you need:

- The famous WordPress software, available from [WordPress.org](#). See also their [Installation Guide](#).
- The THATCamp [logos](#) in various formats. See our page on [designing a logo](#) for guidance on how to customize these logos into one of your own.
- A WordPress theme. You can pick your own theme, or use one of the THATCamp themes we have made: see below for instructions.
- A registration or application form: see below for instructions.

Using THATCamp themes and plugins on a stand-alone site

All THATCamp themes and plugins are available for download on GitHub at <https://github.com/chnm/>. These plugins and themes are automatically installed on every THATCamp site hosted on thatcamp.org.

THATCamp Plugins

The THATCamp Registration plugin generates a registration form and allows site administrators to create site users easily from registrations. See below for instructions on using the plugin.

- THATCamp Registrations plugin — <https://github.com/chnm/thatcamp-registrations/zipball/masters> (.zip)

THATCamp Themes

The THATCamp themes are “child” themes which need their “parent” themes in order to work: to use THATCamp themes on a standalone WordPress site hosted elsewhere, download both the “parent” theme and the “child” theme from the links below, uncompress the .zip files, then upload the files for both the “parent” and “child” themes to your /wp-content/themes folder. Click on the link to the “parent” theme to see a preview of what it looks like.

- [Twenty Ten](#) (parent) and [THATCamp Twenty Ten](#) (child)
- [Arclite](#) (parent) and [THATCamp Arclite](#) (child)
- [Furvious](#) (parent) and [THATCamp Furvious](#) (child)
- [Graphene](#) (parent) and [THATCamp Graphene](#) (child)

If you like, you can [read more about Child Themes for WordPress](#).

Creating a “Campers” page

All THATCamp themes include a template called “Campers” that will automatically generate a page that links to the profiles of the site’s users. (In general, THATCamps make all participants users on the site so that they may post to the blog.) First, create a page called “Campers” or “Participants” or what you will be going to Pages → Add New. Then, in either the Quick Edit or the Edit screen for that page, look for the dropdown box labeled “Templates” and set the template to “Campers.” You’ll wind up with a page such as [this Campers page for THATCamp CHNM 2011](#), with users’ pictures sorted alphabetically by first name linking to their profile pages.

Note that you will not be able to add or remove text from the Campers page. Note also that users can either upload pictures directly to their profile on thatcamp.org or register at Gravatar.com with the same e-mail address as they use for thatcamp.org and upload a picture there. Gravatar is a “global avatar” system run by Automattic, the same company that makes WordPress; pictures uploaded there will be available at WordPress.com and other Gravatar-enabled sites around the Internet.

Creating a registration/application form

There are two different methods we recommend for enabling registrations on your THATCamp website: either use the **THATCamp Registration plugin**, or else create a **Google form** in a Google Docs spreadsheet and link to or embed it on your site. The advantages of the THATCamp registration plugin are that it automatically creates WordPress users and enables automatic e-mails to registrants; the advantage of the Google form is that it's customizable and currently makes it easier to review many applications at once rather than one at a time.

THATCamp Registration plugin

If you have a site on thatcamp.org, your administrative panels should already show a menu titled "THATCamp Registrations." If you are running a WordPress site on another domain, you can [download a .zip file of the THATCamp Registrations plugin from github.com](#).

To use the plugin, create a new page called "Register" or "Apply" and **type the [shortcode \[thatcamp-registration\]](#) in either the Visual or the HTML tab**. This will generate our standard (non-customizable) application form if registrations are open, or will produce the text "Registration is closed" if registrations are closed. Registrations are closed by default; you can open registration on the THATCamp Registrations Settings menu. In your Settings, you can also choose whether to automatically add approved applicants to your site as WordPress users, and you can write text for e-mails that will automatically be sent to users whose applications are Pending, Approved, or Rejected. If the field is left blank, no e-mail will be sent.

Google Docs form

To set up a [Google Docs](#) form, see [Google's own instructions](#). You are also welcome to copy and adapt (or not) our [sample spreadsheet and form](#). Be sure to **copy** the sample spreadsheet and form into a new Google document.

Click on "Form > Go to live form" to get [a link to the form](#) that you can post on your website. You can also embed the form directly on the page (as below) if you make sure to put in the iframe code while you are on the HTML editing tab (not the Visual editing tab). Once people have registered for your THATCamp using a Google form, you can import a CSV file of their information into user accounts on your WordPress website. Instructions on how to import user information is available on our page about [accepting registrations](#).

If you have any questions or requests for your hosted or stand-alone THATCamp website, write info@thatcamp.org.

Loading...

Design a logo



In brief

To make things simple for you, we have provided pieces of THATCamp [logos](#) in various formats for you to use and build upon. This page gives advice about how to create a **custom header and logo** for your THATCamp as easily as possible. Please note that we ask that you use our trademark “THATCamp” in the Whitney font in your own logo, though you can choose any color(s) and add any graphic(s) to it that you like. You can also add text in other fonts.

General design guidelines

Our only real rules for logos on websites and merchandise are these: 1) the word “THATCamp” should be spelled just that way (no lower-case “c” please); and 2) the word “THATCamp” should be reproduced in its original font, a proprietary font called “[Whitney](#).” You [don’t need to buy the Whitney font](#); the [logo files](#) we offer include an .eps file with the lettering outlined that can be edited in Adobe Illustrator. Please use these files to create logos customized for your THATCamp.

Creating a banner / header

If you choose to host your website with us on thatcamp.org and/or to use a THATCamp WordPress theme, you may notice that the default header for your site says “THATCamp Your Name Here.” All THATCamp themes will allow you to replace that default header with your own header through the administrative panel settings (probably under Appearance → Header). It will be easiest for you to create a custom THATCamp banner if you have access to both **Adobe Photoshop** and **Adobe Illustrator**. Write info@thatcamp.org if you need help.

First, figure out what size banner you need. On thatcamp.org all THATCamp themes are automatically installed, and you can see the dimensions of the header in the theme’s description by clicking on Appearance → Themes in your WordPress administration panel. For instance, the “THATCamp Twenty Ten” theme requires a header of 940 pixels by 198 pixels. If you choose to use this theme, you can start making a banner with this file: <http://thatcamp.org/docs/logos/thatcamp-header-twentyten.psd>. Other THATCamp themes will also have .psd files provided at <http://thatcamp.org/docs/logos>.

Note that the .psd file has several layers for the THATCamp text, graphic, and THATCamp name. Feel free to change the colors and to add or remove text or graphics, but please don’t warp the shape of any existing text or graphics, particularly of the word “THATCamp.” For additional text, such as that used in “The Humanities and Technology Camp,” you can use any font you like; we’ve found that both [Gill Sans Bold](#) and [Myriad](#), which are on most computers, are a good match. Replace the text “Your Name Here” with the name of your THATCamp using the text tool in any font you like. If you would like to change the color(s) of the text for the word “THATCamp,” it’s easier to do that in Adobe Illustrator.

Here are a few examples of THATCamp banners — these all happen to be white or transparent, and several use black text for “THATCamp,” but you can use any background or text color you like:



THATCAMP Victoria

The Humanities and Technology Camp

Merchandise

T-shirts and other merchandise (magnets, bags, USB sticks) may need a square logo, such as the marvelous one created by THATCamp Liberal Arts Colleges:



If you create such a logo, make sure that the resolution of your image is high enough (300 dpi at least) to print well on merchandise. Please be sure that “THATCamp” is reproduced using the Whitney font [logo files](#) we have provided — you can change the color or size to anything you like, and there are no other limitations.



Publicize the event

Come to **THATCAMP**



The Humanities and Technology Camp

WHERE?



WHEN?



VISIT OUR WEBSITE



FOLLOW US
ON TWITTER



THATCamp is an open, inexpensive meeting where humanists and technologists of all skill levels learn and build together in sessions proposed on the spot.

For more information about all THATCamps worldwide, [visit thatcamp.org](http://thatcamp.org).

In brief

The best ways to publicize your THATCamp in order to recruit participants: **email**, **web forums**, **Twitter** and other social media, **fliers**, and by keeping **THATCamp Central** apprised of your plans.

General publicity advice

There's an infinite amount of publicity you can do for a THATCamp. If you have willing helpers, put them on publicity duty — draft an e-mail announcement ([see a template for a typical THATCamp “CFP” here](#)) with the link to the registration form and ask your helpers to e-mail it to people, organizations, and departments who might be interested. They can do likewise for topic-focused forums and listservs. Be sure that your announcement carries a notice such as “Please distribute widely” so that others are encouraged to spread it around.

The # hashtag gets lots of traffic and is regularly perused by THATCamp junkies, so if you make sure to have a Twitter account and use the hashtag #, the word will be sure to get out. The @ account also regularly retweets tweets from THATCamp accounts.

Not everyone uses Twitter, of course. Try posting announcements about your THATCamp on the [H-Net](#) discussion networks, especially digital humanities-oriented listservs like [EDTECH](#), [H-AHC](#), [H-DigiRhet](#), and [H-Info](#). (Add to this list any other H-Net groups whose subject matter of interest might be relevant to your particular THATCamp.) Join [HASTAC](#) (the Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory), a project bringing together people interested in all things digital and educational; anybody can [become a member](#), and members can post events to the [HASTAC calendar](#). Finally, [HUMANIST](#) is a long-standing listserv and discussion group for those interested in the humanities and computing. Email the list's editor to post a one-time announcement of your THATCamp—or join, and post it yourself.

Don't forget to advertise locally. Chris Raymond, our designer, has thoughtfully created a set of [THATCamp flier templates \(.zip\)](#) at <http://thatcamp.org/docs/thatcamp-fliers.zip> in .docx and .tif format that you can customize and post around campus or around town. The blue version is depicted above.

Finally, make sure that we here at THATCamp Central have the correct dates and places for your THATCamp — keep the [registry](#) updated and/or email info@thatcamp.org. We send out a newsletter, creatively named [THATCamp News](#), about once a month, and we make sure to keep [the home page of thatcamp.org](#) updated with the most current information about upcoming THATCamps.

Accept registrations



In brief

You can use the THATCamp Registrations plugin or a Google form to accept applications or registrations for your THATCamp. Expect a 15% cancellation rate. Be sure to make all participants user accounts with Author privileges on your site. Use these [sample emails](#) to reply to participant registrations and prompt them to propose sessions.

Applications or registrations?

One decision you'll need to make is whether to pick and choose who you'd like to attend your THATCamp (i.e., accept applications) or whether to accept everyone on a first-come first-served basis (i.e., accept registrations). That decision is up to you, but in general, we recommend that you set a quota based on how many people you can accommodate (for instance, 75 people) and then **accept everyone who applies as long as you have space for them**. This is more in line with THATCamp's principles of openness, and it simplifies logistical decisions such as meal planning. Moreover, most THATCamps don't fill up, and even those that are oversubscribed don't usually have to disappoint more than 10-20 people. (There are plenty of THATCamps these days for people to attend!) You can run a wait list if more people want to come than you have space for.

Cancellations

Our experience shows that for local THATCamps, **about 15% of registrants will cancel** or simply won't show up. The exception to this rule is THATCamps held in conjunction with other large events for which people have made extensive travel arrangements. After all, THATCamp is usually free, or nearly so, so unless people have booked flights and hotels, there's not much of a commitment, and emergencies and conflicts will inevitably crop up. Most cancellations will happen in the last few days before the THATCamp takes place.

Website registration forms

There are two ways to create a registration form on your website: use the THATCamp Registration plugin or use a Google form. The former makes it easier to create users with full profiles on your site, while the latter is currently more customizable and makes it easier to see information about all your users at once. See our page on [building a THATCamp website](#) for detailed instructions on both options.

Creating user accounts for participants

At THATCamp, we habitually **give all participants user accounts on the site so that they can propose session ideas using the site's blog**. If you use the THATCamp Registrations plugin, an applicant will be made a user account on the site when you approve their registration.

If you use a Google form for registrations, however, you can import the user information. What you'll need to do is make sure that your spreadsheet has the exact same column headers as those in this sample Google Doc ([download sample as .csv](#)):

Before importing, you'll need to make sure that the "user_login" field and the "user_pass" field have something in the cell, so you'll need to make up user names and passwords for your users. Also, to store t-shirt size data properly in user profiles on thatcamp.org, you will need to convert the data in your spreadsheet to the following values in exactly this form (not including the bullet points):

- mens_s
- mens_m
- mens_l
- mens_xl
- mens_xxl
- womens_s
- womens_m
- womens_l
- womens_xl
- womens_xxl

T-shirt size data formatted differently (e.g., “Men’s Large”) will not be stored in the user’s profile on thatcamp.org.

Once your file is properly formatted, go to Users → Import From CSV in your thatcamp.org site and import the file. Be sure to check both the checkboxes so that the system will email users and will nag them to change their passwords when they first log in. (If you are running a WordPress site on another domain, download and install the [Import Users From CSV](#) plugin to enable this functionality.) By default, users will be imported as Subscribers. Go to All Users and click on “Subscriber” to show all the Subscribers, select the checkbox next to Username to select all users, and do “Change role to Author” in the dropdown.

All the THATCamp Users should have a user account with “Author” privileges so that they can post session ideas, session notes, and other items to the blog. And be sure to let them know that they should fill out their user profile and should begin contributing to the blog!

Emailing participants

As of this writing (May 2012), it is not possible for site administrators to obtain a list of registered THATCamp participants with all their registration information, though we hope to provide this feature soon, by fall 2012 at the latest. Write info@thatcamp.org to obtain a list of registered THATCampers with all their attached information.

Here are some [sample emails](#) to participants to send when their registration is Pending or Accepted (these can be entered directly into the THATCamp Registrations Settings) and when it’s time to remind or educate them on [proposing unconference sessions](#). Feel free to adapt these for your own use.

Set the Stage **Beef up your technology**



Plan workshops



In brief

Plenty of THATCamp participants are interested in picking up **new skills** from one another, so you might want to pre-arrange a few workshops to take place during your THATCamp. (Note: our workshop series used to be called “BootCamp,” a term we have now deprecated. Also note that our Mellon fellowship program has ended as of 12/5/2011.)

Finding workshop instructors

As a THATCamp organizer, you might decide up front what workshops you will offer and who will teach them, or you might crowdsource those decisions to your THATCampers, or else you might do some combination of both. You might know some talented people in your area (perhaps even you or your co-organizers) who would be more than willing to teach a workshop at your THATCamp, and you could therefore set it all up beforehand. Alternatively, you can ask people who apply to your THATCamp “What would you like to learn?” and/or “What would you be willing and able to teach?” and plan your workshop offerings based on the answers to those questions.

If your THATCamp applicants have indicated that they’d like a workshop on a particular skill or topic, but you can’t find a qualified volunteer instructor in your region or among your applicants, [e-mail the THATCamp Coordinator](#) to ask for help.

Scheduling the workshops

Organizers are increasingly saying that having a separate day dedicated to workshops is a good idea. See, for instance, [THATCamp Virginia's dedicated workshop day](#), which took place before an additional day and a half of unconferencing. Some workshops have run concurrently with unconference sessions, however, as an educational track through the unconference, also with good success: see for instance [THATCamp New England's schedule](#) with workshop sessions incorporated. (Note: many participants did say in the evaluations that they'd have preferred that the workshop training sessions take place on a separate day.)

Giving participants workshop information

On a page on your website, you should give the following information for all workshops:

- Title
- Instructor's name (preferably linked to a profile)
- Prerequisites (knowledge, skills, accounts, software)
- Difficulty level of proposed workshop
- Description

Curriculum

We have developed a broad curriculum to help you plan workshops at THATCamp. There can be as many workshops as you like, and they can all fit under one skill heading or under several different skill headings. We advise that all workshops should be **introductory** (especially those dealing with markup and programming languages; assume no prior knowledge of coding) and should emphasize **first principles, background, and context**; workshops other than those under the first two headings should also include at least one **hands-on exercise** (though nothing harder than “Hello, world!”). Workshop examples are given below; other pertinent workshops are more than welcome. See the page on [getting training at workshops](#) for examples of past and upcoming workshop offerings.

1. Understanding the history of technology and the humanities
 1. Brief history of computing
 2. Brief history of Digital Humanities
2. Understanding ongoing legal and social issues related to technology and the humanities
 1. Copyright issues in the humanities
 2. Economic issues in scholarly communication
 3. The Google Book Search settlement
3. Finding and managing humanities information
 1. Google Scholar / databases
 2. Google Book Search
 3. Zotero / Mendeley / CiteULike

4. Digitizing, editing, organizing, publishing, and preserving humanities materials
 1. Text / image / audio / video digitization
 2. XML
 3. XSLT
 4. TEI
 5. EAD
 6. Omeka
 7. Metadata standards
 8. Indexing
 9. Linked data
 10. Databases and data structures
5. Collecting, interpreting, analyzing, and manipulating humanities data
 1. Text mining
 2. Visualization tools
 3. Web analytics
 4. Yahoo! Pipes
 5. Open Layers
 6. ARCGIS
6. Creating, presenting, and publishing humanities study
 1. HTML
 2. CSS
 3. Photoshop
 4. Graphic design
 5. Information architecture
 6. Typography
 7. Usability testing
 8. CommentPress / digress.it
 9. WordPress
 10. PowerPoint / Keynote / Prezi
 11. Video creation
 12. Audio / podcast creation
7. Working collaboratively, both formally and informally
 1. Project management
 2. Project budgeting
 3. Getting project funding
 4. Wikis
 5. Google Docs
 6. Social media
8. Using programming languages and tools
 1. JavaScript
 2. PHP
 3. MySQL

4. UNIX
5. Perl
6. Regular expressions
7. Yahoo! Pipes
8. Google Inventor for Android

During Your THATCamp Schedule sessions



In brief

Don't worry. It'll all be fine. It'll be better than fine: it'll be fun. Just make sure 1) that everyone has a chance to help create the schedule **together**, 2) that there is at the same time **at least one person in charge** of the schedule who tracks the group's decisions and creates the schedule, and 3) that the opening session of THATCamp leaves sufficient time for the group to make a schedule: about **60-90 minutes**.

Why wait so long to schedule sessions?

The fact that no one knows exactly what will happen at THATCamp until they get there is often the most worrying part of the event for both organizers and participants. It's therefore worth noting here what you'll gain from leaving the agenda-setting until the first hour or two of the event:

- Participants, instead of carefully preparing what they will say (or staying up late the night before to finish a presentation, which of course we here at THATCamp have never ever done, not once), must perforce speak **spontaneously**. This usually leads to greater **candor** and more admissions of uncertainty, which in turn leads to **problem-solving instead of posturing**.
- Proposing, voting for, sorting, and discussing sessions together in the first hour or two is a great



ice-breaker; it means that campers must engage with one another right away. It's a bonding thing; it's a collaboration thing; it's a getting to know each other thing.

- Topics and tasks will be **current**. Things emerge, change, and disappear fast in technology.
- Everyone will have a chance to make sure the schedule is strong: that the sessions are of interest to everyone and that there is **as little redundancy and schedule conflict as possible**.
- The schedule, having been so quickly and casually arranged, can be just as quickly and casually disarranged. A last-minute schedule is more **flexible**: sessions can be eliminated or added (especially if you make sure to leave a few slots free) depending on interest. It's a very frequent occurrence at a THATCamp that a session is going so well that participants clamor for another; this way you can accommodate them.

Even if you have asked (as many organizers do) for some initial ideas for sessions from THATCampers, you will likely find that not everyone has proposed something, and you will subsequently find that it doesn't matter. As long as you ask again when THATCamp begins, and as long as you have a reasonable system for tracking and sorting the ideas (more on that below), an agenda will inevitably emerge. Just trust the process.

One final note: the process described below is a set of guidelines more than a set of rules: if you want to alter it in some way, please go right ahead.

The blank schedule online

Create a blank schedule online that lists time slots and rooms. Many people have used Google Docs spreadsheets for this with great success: see for instance [the schedule for THATCamp Canberra](#). Here is a sample [blank THATCamp schedule](#) done in Google Docs for you to copy if you like. Publish the Google Doc spreadsheet by going to "Share > Publish as a web page"; you can also embed it on your THATCamp website by choosing "Get a link to the published data > HTML to embed in a page." You can also create a blank schedule in a simple list on your THATCamp website with both time slots and room numbers listed, or in an HTML table.

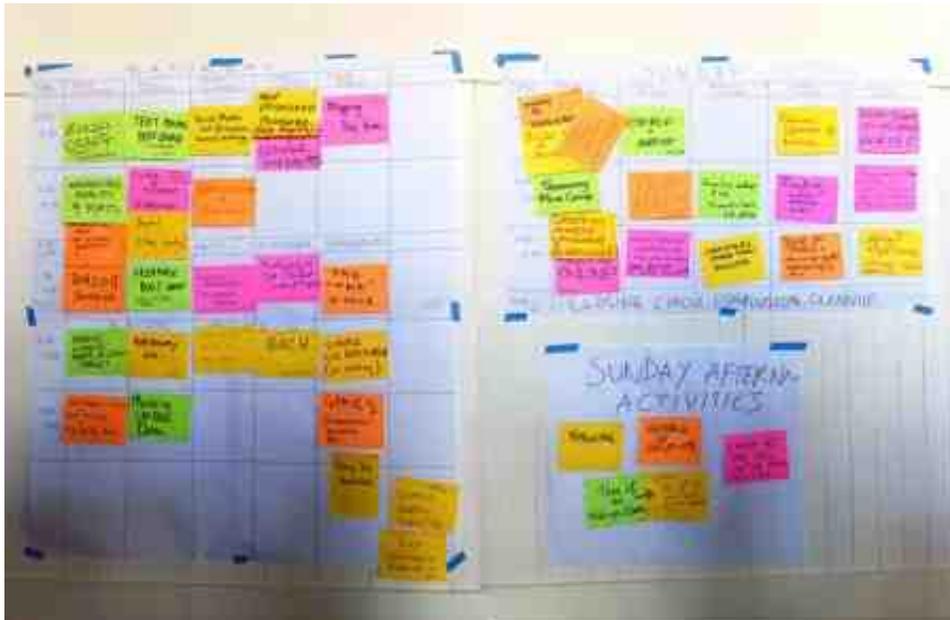
The blank schedule on-site at your THATCamp

For the first session of your THATCamp, you will then need some way to create a big empty grid IRL (in real life). Suggested supplies:

- A large whiteboard, chalkboard, an easel, or sheets of large white paper that can be stuck to the walls with tape or similar
- Markers or chalk
- Post-It notes

Before THATCamp begins, draw a **blank grid** (or list) on your whiteboard, chalkboard, or empty piece of paper with the same number of cells (spaces) as your schedule grid. Before or during the **first session**, as people are gathering, ask them to write a word or two describing their idea for a session in one of the cells (or

on a Post-It note that they can put on a cell). Ask them also to put a hash mark or other indication of interest beside sessions they are interested in attending; you could also do this with a simple show of hands for every session. Cells can have more than one proposal, or none at all. **Give everyone a chance to propose a session, and give everyone a chance to vote** (some, of course, will choose to abstain from the former and perhaps also the latter). Afterward, you'll have a board that looks something like the one of those pictured on this page. Here's a picture of the schedule board (with Post-Its) at THATCamp Bay Area:



Finalizing the schedule

Once you've gathered session proposals and votes, you can begin a process of light editing. Session proposals that are of little interest to participants can be combined with other, related sessions, or eliminated altogether. Popular sessions can be assigned to larger rooms. Sessions can be arranged so that sessions on related topics are not happening at the same time. A few empty time slots are a boon rather than a curse; it means that exciting conversations that happen during the unconference can be given a time and place to continue. If the discussion about the schedule threatens to exceed the time allotted, you can always **schedule the sessions in the first time slot first**, send participants off to their sessions in that first time slot, and continue the process of creating a workable schedule.

After this editing is more or less complete, **fill in the blank schedule online**. The schedule should be left up on a prominent screen so that participants can refer to it as they begin the day. It's also a very good idea to **print copies** of the finalized schedule and **post them outside the session rooms**, or at least to write down session topics on pieces of paper with their time slots and post those at the session rooms. Participants should also be encouraged to **contact the scheduling person** with additions and changes as the unconference continues, or even to make changes themselves if you want to allow them to do this.

Additional tips

- It's always a good idea to schedule **wrap-up sessions** of at least fifteen minutes for all participants at the end of every day. People need closure. Organizers may also need to make logistical announcements about road conditions, food, social events, and the like.
- Same goes for **introductory sessions** at the start of each day.
- Scheduled **“free play” sessions** are also a good idea, sessions where people can try out new technologies they've learned in a hands-on way and/or continue discussions they've had in the sessions. It might sound like a contradiction in terms to schedule free time, but time is like lunch — it's never really free.
- Even at an unconference, some of the best conversations take place in the hallway. **Leave time between sessions**: at least ten minutes, or fifteen, or even thirty.

One final picture of a schedule board, this one made with tape and paper on a glass wall, from THATCamp Research Triangle Park in North Carolina:



Afterwards

Evaluate how it went



In brief

The THATCamp Coordinator will ask participants to [give feedback on the THATCamp](#) you have organized by filling out [a brief survey](#). You can also conduct your own, more detailed evaluations if you like. We have recently made the [results of the evaluations](#) entirely public (all evaluators are anonymous), so anyone can browse through the evaluations for any or all THATCamps.