

What's a BarCamp conference?

Our presentations and workshops are organized in an ad-hoc fashion, inspired by BarCamp events (www.barcamp.org).

On Saturday morning after the introduction at ART 220, we will begin pitches for the event. On the event wiki pages (ur1.ca/2sn33), participants have added short descriptions of their pitches. Feel free to add pitches on that wiki page until introductions start. When pitches begin, each participant will have the opportunity to explain their session in about 20 seconds or less.

BarCamps are participant-driven events, and anyone who wants to run a session is invited to do a pitch. Your pitch advertises your talk and convinces other people to vote for it and attend.

After the pitches, conference participants will quickly vote on which pitches they would like to see the most. The session titles will be posted on the wall on pieces of paper. Each participant should make a tally mark on the session proposals that interest them the most, marking as many proposals as they like. Tallies allow the organizers and participants to reduce conflicts, combine two like subjects, or remove sessions with low interest.

Scheduling of sessions is also a collaborative effort. Speakers and attendees work with each other to eliminate conflicts and produce a logical schedule. Once the schedule is completed, it is transcribed to the wiki for everyone's reference.

We only have 90 minutes for the introduction, pitches and scheduling, so it is incredibly important that we start on time at 9:00 a.m. and that we stay on topic and on our schedule.

Although the opening session and scheduling will happen in the Art Building (ART), the actual sessions will take place in the Artisan Court at the Brickyard (BYAC).

The Rule of Two Feet is encouraged. This rule is simple: You are not required to stay in a session that loses your interest. If you find the presentation is not what you thought it would be, use your two feet to find an alternative session. If you'd like a session leader to cover a different kind of material, ask them about it. (Nicely, of course—we value courtesy along with flexibility.)

Sound confusing? In principle, you'd be right. In practice, though, this process results in a dynamic, engaging and information-packed event. The combination of collaboration, flexibility and user-driven content makes it nearly impossible to leave the conference dissatisfied. Once you've experienced a BarCamp style event, you may find you enjoy it more than other formats!