

Start Writing on Site

A Pattern to Return to a Pattern Conference

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You submitted a paper to a PLoP conference and the paper was accepted for a writers' workshop. Now you are at the conference.

You enjoy your stay very much and want to return to the conference next year.

You could return next year without submitting a paper. But then, you might not get funding to cover travel costs and the conference fee. Plus, without a paper of your own, a PLoP conference is less fun and not a whole experience.

Writing a paper is time-consuming. If writing papers is not part of your daily work, others tasks may have a higher priority.

At the conference, you are open-minded and it is easy for you to mine new patterns. But back at home, many urgent tasks are waiting for your attention. Until you find time to start writing, you might have forgotten most of your thoughts.

The general atmosphere at the location and conversations with like-minded people are thought provoking. But at home, you might be missing such an inspiring environment.

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Therefore:

At the conference, write down detailed notes of all your thoughts that might help you to submit another paper next year.

You only need to outline the most important aspects of your thoughts. Focus on the essence and hold off on any formatting. If you want to document new patterns, you could, for example, restrict yourself to pairs of problems and solutions or fill in a pattern template.

Revising and finishing a paper is often easier than beginning a new paper. The most important aspects are already recorded and just need to be expanded and revised. You might even feel the need to complete the paper rather than leaving it incomplete.

With a bunch of written notes at hand, you might approach other participants during the conference whether they can relate to your thoughts and whether they are interested in co-authoring.

Then again, when you take some time off during the conference, you might miss out interesting events or the opportunity to talk to friends and colleagues. You could even miss an opportunity to deepen your new insights.

Even if you got a good idea for a new pattern, it might be difficult to focus your thoughts. Great thoughts sometimes need time to evolve.

Some of your ideas might not make it into a new paper, for example because a pattern has already been documented before. So you should consider writing notes for multiple papers and choose the most promising one at home.

There are some alternative solutions: instead of actually writing a draft, you could draw a mind-map or a picture that illustrates your ideas. You could also record your thoughts.

The pattern *START WRITING TODAY* has been successfully applied multiple times by the author himself, for example at the EuroPLoP conference 2012 where he wrote down notes for this paper.

Many thanks go to Stefan Holtel for his elaborate and insightful comments as a shepherd.