Hints for Organizers of a Scientific Conference
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Preparation of the Conference

- Have the webpage as early as possible online.
- Tell the link to the people responsible for www.positronannihilation.net, in case it is a positron conference.
- Get the email address list from the last organizer. Ask for problematic guests.
- It is a good idea to have different conference email addresses to be announced at the contact webpage of the conference, so that different problems can be handled by different colleagues, e.g. info@conference.de for general questions, accommodation@conference.de, program@conference.de, travelinfo@conference.de, proceedings@conference.de, and so on.
- Ask early enough all participants whether they agree to the publication of the talk files (as pdf) on DVD. In case somebody does not agree, the abstract will be taken, or a weaker version without the problematic data can be supplied. This is an important intermediate step between the abstract volume and the conference volume, which is often delayed more than a year.
- Give the street address for the arrival for those who come by car. Many people use navigation systems nowadays.
- Give a time block diagram on the rear page of the abstract book.
- Don't have too expensive conference bags. People have a collection of them at home already. Give a chance to put somewhere the name of the owner, otherwise they all look the same and mixing up becomes possible.
- Never simply scan city maps and put them to the web. In some countries there are people searching the web to find unauthorized copies to get some money out.
- Give an emergency mobile phone number to the participants in the last email. Then, people can ask for help in case they really need this. In case you don't want to publish your mobile phone number, just give one of your phone numbers at your office and redirect the incoming calls there to your mobile phone during the conference period.
- In the technical hints for preparing the talks, tell the people that they shall store the fonts in their PowerPoint files. This is an option in all versions of PowerPoint. In Office 2007 it is in the general options of the program. This avoids missing or wrong letters especially in equations, which are caused by equation programs because they often bring their own fonts, which then will not be found in the lecture hall PC. Pdf files are not so sensitive in this respect, but to be sure, one can store the letters as curves, then nothing should happen to the original looking.

Accommodation

- Give a list of available hotels near the conference venue including price information. The participants should register there by themselves.
- Try to get a special price at the closest hotels and arrange a code word (name of conference).

- For large conferences one shall try to hand over the responsibility to a travel agency. This will make the things for you much easier.
- Never try to handle the hotel accommodation by yourself. This will absorb you too much.
- Try to find a cheaper place for students (dormitory or something similar).
- In case a part of the accommodation is not in walking distance and a conference bus service is too expensive, organize two tickets a day for the local traffic and give further information (map, time schedule, possible lines).

Conference Venue

- There must be always somebody in the lecture room who knows the technique in detail.
  - He/she must be in the room early enough before a session starts to assist the speakers (Laptop, USB). He/she must…
  - … must speak English.
  - … must check all the technique in the beginning of a session.
  - … must know the emergency exit and must have a key, if the door is locked.
  - … must change the battery of laser pointer (a green one) and microphone in time (check manual for battery life)
- There must be a second laser pointer and maybe a second microphone (in a large room).
- On the PC used for presentation Office 2007 is needed. This is because the file format has changed. In case only Office 2003 or an older version is available, there are free viewer programs for the new formats pptx/pptm and docx at the Microsoft webpage.
- The newest Acrobat Reader should be installed.
- Allow own laptops of the speaker only when really necessary (for showing videos, animations or so). In case you have those laptops, it is a good idea to have a simple manual video switch for at least 4 VGA sources, so that 3 laptops can be adopted before a session. The testing and switching is then very fast.
- Another possibility is to use the second VGA input of the beamer and the switch at the beamer.
- Have power adaptors available for Japanese, American, European … power plugs.
- In a large hall (> 100 people) you must have a microphone. Don't use one to be hold in the hand. Even worse are those to be fixed at the table or a stand.
- In a large room it is good to have 2…3 microphones for the discussion for people who are asking. You need then one extra person for each mike.
- In lecture room: some people prefer real pointers instead of laser pointers, if possible. Have one available.
- Test the size of the projection area. Go to the rear seats and use a normal-sized slight to test the readability. Very often, the size is too small for a large room.
- Be sure that the beamer is in a position where the projection area is just filled, not too far away.
- The room illumination must be reduced. Moreover, the sun may disturb strongly. Check, whether there are suitable curtains, or something similar.
- For the discussion, a blackboard, a whiteboard or a paperboard with pencils is needed.
- Nowadays there are easy-to-use remote control units with built-in laser pointer for PowerPoint and pdf presentations. This is standard equipment for lecture halls, have one available.

- In the lecture hall there must be a large clock at the wall which can be seen by the speaker and the chairmen. A hand-bell is very useful to open the sessions and call the people into the room.
- Ask the speakers strictly to put their files before the session to the presentation PC or ask them to try their laptops in advance to the session.
- In a large lecture hall it is possible to have a second beamer or overhead to show messages of the organizers to begin or end of a session parallel to the session. Don't leave the message there for the whole time. Switch it off after some time.
- In case you have parallel sessions, mark the rooms clearly according to the sessions. Put a time schedule of each session large enough at both doors. In this case, the time schedule must be strictly respected by the chairmen's for those who switch between sessions. In case a speaker is missing, you must extend the discussion of the talk before, or make a short break.
- In the last time a bad habit occurs: sometimes almost all listeners opened there laptops and start to do some Email/Internet activities during the talks. These participants really disturbs those sitting nearby and try to listen. And it is a strange feeling for the speaker. To reduce this, one could switch off the WIFI access points for the lecture rooms, if technically possible, or give it a password which is not published. In case the email room is very close, this is not possible, since there WIFI access is absolutely necessary.
- Think about having a video stream online of the talks. This would allow the colleagues who were not able to come to follow the program.
- Organize a conference photo! A broad stair a good place. But also on an even area it is possible when the photographer is able to be in first floor level (long ladder or 1st floor of a building).

Lectures
- Instruct the chairman's to strictly keep the time. This is a difficult thing but it is possible.
- In program: announce the time of the talk and in addition the time of the discussion, e.g. 20+10 min
- Chairman's shall be careful with the discussion time, not too long overtime discussion

Email / Internet access
- You need about 3 desktop PC's for email and word processing per 50 participants.
- The PC's need an English operating system.
- They should be available all the day in an extra room.
- Put the access information (user and password) close to the computer when a reset is necessary. This should be a guest account with no rights for installation of programs.
- Many people come with their own laptops. So you should have WIFI installed. The WIFI internet access should by unencrypted (no password). This is important to avoid problems which usually occur with older laptops. The problem: older laptops often have WEP encryption only and cannot be used in the current WAP or WAP(2) encryption modes. In case encryption is absolutely necessary, use WEP encryption and put the access ID/PW clearly at the wall.
- In addition, about 3…5 LAN lines should be available for those who don't want to use WIFI or who have trouble with this.

- Word and PowerPoint should be installed in an English version.
- In case the keyboard is very different from an English one (e.g. the French one), have English keyboards installed.
- A printer should be available in the network or at least one PC should be equipped with a direct printer.

Breaks
- Coffee break:
  - Not less than 20min
  - At least 2 coffee points / 50 persons
  - Have some cake or cookies
  - Have at least coffee, tea, water, and juice
- Lunch break:
  - Time at least 90 min, 60 min are usually not enough
  - Lunch counter must be fast enough, check this before

Poster
- Supply enough material to fix the posters to the poster walls. Usually, many people will fix their posters at the same time.
- It is always a good idea to have two poster sessions. Otherwise people having a poster are not able to see the other posters.
- Give the correct format of the poster walls already in the webpage. In case you don't know this information in time, say it is portrait format. Then it will fit always.

Name tags
- Print there only what is necessary. The symbol of the conference is enough; or give the name of the conference in a small font in light grey, or so.
- The name is most important and should be prominent, thus as large as possible in black. Don't minimize the contrast by using unfavorable color combinations.
- Give the affiliation in a similar font under the name using a bit smaller font.
- Do not use academic titles at all.
- Keep in mind that older colleagues are often farsighted and need at a small distance glasses when the font is too small. And when taking their glasses they claim that they don't know the person in front.

After the Conference
- The deadline for the conference proceedings should be not later than the last day of the conference. When you can manage to have the manuscripts in already at the beginning of the conference, you have the chance to have most of the referee reports done at the end of the conference. It is easy to remember the referees during the conference.
- Otherwise allow the referees at least 3…4 weeks for their reports. Often people do holiday trips just after a conference. A shorter time is not realistic.
- In case you organize a small workshop, a CD with the conference contributions is often the best solution for the publication of the conference results.

- In case you plan a proceeding volume, then contact the publisher about one year before the conference.
- Make the list of all participants including the email addresses available to all participants, but don't put the list to the web. Send a mail with a file attached.