

Bios Editing in Zambia

Percy*

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Abstract:

*NELA.Percy@gmail.com

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1 Introduction

The biographical information for your presenters is an important part of the convention experience that Zambia manages. This is part of how people decide they want to attend your convention and part of what they might want to do when there. From a presenter's point of view, the biographical information is a way to connect with their fan-base, and allow contact, give information, or arrange for continued interactions. From a con manager's point of view, managing biographical information is fairly work-intensive, and one of the things that doesn't exactly scale.

There are several pieces that make up the biographical information matrix within Zambia. Few, any, or all of the elements can be chosen to be deployed and customized to the desire of your particular convention or set of conventions. Currently the biographical information is designed to be held in a shared database, outside of a specific convention, so that, while the information is available and editable within that convention, when the information is updated, it is updated across all the conventions served from the same server, and information is available across multiple convention instances. Not all of the conventions will necessarily use all of the information.

2 Biographical Information Matrix

The biographical information Matrix is made up of three different values. The types of biographical information, the status of a biographical element, and the language that that element is written in.

2.1 Types

The (extendable) types that are currently in use in Zambia are:

- Web: The verbose biographical information, limited by variables in the `db_name.php` file, that is shared on your Zambia site, for all to browse to, often less limited than the published information. Most HTML markup works with this type.
- Book: The biographical information that is published in your convention book, handout, or other printed materials that is often more limited by space concerns, and publishing costs. These limits are set in the `db_name.php` file. This will be published so markup and hypertext is discouraged.
- URI: The set of Uniform Resource Identifiers (URLs, URNs, etc) that are available on your Zambia site, for people to follow. Most HTML markup works with this type.
- Picture: This is a URI reference to either an outside (`http`) picture or, preferably, a copy of said picture residing on the serving machine (`/path/to/picture`), so if the original gets hacked, Zambia isn't compromised.

2.2 States

- raw: This is the information provided by the presenter when they are permitted to, within Zambia. This might be as far as the involvement with the biographical information that the Zambia staff will have. This allows for unknown people to put unknown references and information on your web-site. Beware.

- **edited:** This is intended to be the mid-step, the negotiation point between the people responsible for what is being published in the literature and on the web, and the individual presenters, it is presented to them, so dialogue can happen, and they can see how it is to be presented, should it be approved. This might be as far as the involvement with the biographical information that the Zambia staff will have. Once in the edited mode it might be considered published.
- **good:** This is intended to be what is published. Once the edited matches the raw, it should be promoted to the good level, then if changes to the raw show up, they can go back through the vetting process and, once again, be promoted to good, and then available for the various publishing media.

2.3 Languages

The language field is designed to contain any of the various language elements. Currently en-us and fr-ca are the two expected ones, as a hold-over from the original "secondary language" concept of Zambia when it was used for a Canadian event. Starting any language will allow it to be flexible enough to have it show up in the appropriate tables. Just adding to the LANGUAGE_LIST searches for each/all of the languages listed. While this is a first step in the internationalization of this software, expanding the rest, along these lines is expected and planned for. Each of the other elements, the various verbiage on the pages, and in the reports will pull from similar tables, able to be customized off of, or feed concurrently, depending on the design the multiple languages available. All of the biographical information is designed to be subsequently displayed, rather than switched on the \$_SESSION['language'] variable.

3 Pages

3.1 StaffManageBios.php

The starting point for managing the biographical information data. This is set to work with only those folks who will be published. This is all the presenters, and the any of the super-volunteers. They might not be chosen to be published, or they might be, depending on the choice of the convention, and the relative space in the various publications.

The rows are organized around the states so that if there is missing raw, edited (if used), and good (if used) elements, they are reported first, then if the raw elements and the edited elements don't match (if used) or the edited elements and the good elements don't match (if used) they are reported next. Then, lastly, if everything matches, that is reported last. Hopefully, come publication time, and con-time, all the elements will be in the last row.

The columns are a combination of the various languages available (somewhat useless if only one language is used, but there, as a place-holder) and the type of the element.

To bring up the list of individuals in any particular category of missing, incorrect, or even correct information, simply click on the number of elements in the state you wish to work with. In the example below, there are seven individuals who do not have an edited en-us web entry in the biographical information matrix. By clicking on the "7" in that section of the table, you bring up the list of participants who's elements need editing.

The table might resemble the following:

Table 1: Staff - Manage Participant Biographies

Count of the States of the bios	en-us web	fr-ca web	en-us book	fr-ca book	en-us uri	fr-ca uri	en
Missing raw bio			3	6	59	61	
Missing edited bio	7	16	21	5	48	61	
Missing good bio	59	59	59	59	59	61	
Raw bio doesn't match edited bio	17	11	18	19	9		
Edited bio doesn't match good bio	12	9	28	46	9		
All bios match	5	3	4				61

Once the particular subsection of the editing has been picked, you will be provided with a matrix of names in this category, so you might choose the one(s) to be edited.

The three columns in this table are:

- Participant: If the link that is this name is chosen from this column, you will be brought to the 3.2 page relevant to the participant chosen, for editing purposes.
- Edit Full: If the link that is this name is chosen from this column, you will be brought to the 3.3 page, in the mode of editing the participant chosen, in case that is necessary to find out more about who they are, or if there are any notes, or the like to assist you with the biographical information editing.
- Currently being edited by: This shows you the individual who presumes that they are the one editing the particular information. Please, do not choose to edit biographical information for someone who is locked by someone other than you.

The table might resemble the following:

Table 2: Staff - Manage Participant Biographies Subedit

Participant	Edit Full	Currently being edited by
Mr E.	Mr E.	
Joker	Joker	Str8mn
Batman	Batman	The Riddler
The Riddler	The Riddler	Batman
Catwoman	Catwoman	
Cartman	Cartman	
Robin	Robin	

There is also the "return" link, just above the table, that brings you back to the Staff - Manage Participant Biographies, in case you are done with this particular subset of individuals, and wish to deal with another.

3.2 StaffEditBios.php

If the edited and/or good states are to be used, this page is where an individual's information is edited. If just the raw information is used, there is no need to use this page. Once this page is opened for a participant, the editing individual's name will be placed in the "Currently being edited by" column, so two people don't try to edit the same bio information at the same time.

There are two links at the top of the page. The first, being the individuals name, will lead you to the 3.3 page, in the mode of editing the participant chosen, and the return link, which will bring you right back to the table Staff - Manage Participant Biographies Subedit on the 3.1 page.

Of course, any of the "Save Whole Page" buttons will save the current state of the entire page, and clear the "Currently being edited by" flag.

This design of this page has a series of elements, broken down first by state element (raw, edited, good) state, then by language (en-us, fr-ca), and then by the type (web, book, uri, picture) allowing for the editing of the edited (if used) and good (if used) information. The raw information is there for reference and copying purposes only and is not in a malleable state.

3.3 StaffEditCreateParticipant.php

While this page is of more general use (which is documented elsewhere) if absolutely necessary, it can be used to modify the raw biographical information. This is most useful should that be the only state of the information chosen for this instance of Zambia. The raw state of all of the types (web, book, URI, picture) and languages are available to be edited on this page.