Why Is Bleeding Edge a Different Conference?

With friends Matevž Gačnik and Dušan Zupančič, we are preparing the [Bleeding Edge](http://www.bleedingedge.si/) conference for the fourth year. During last three years, the conference achieved status »different« among attendees. What is the reason for this status, what makes it different to other technical conferences?

First of all, this is a ***technical*** conference. All three of us got fed up of conferences that were full of marketing, low-level technical stuff, and »what's new« presentations. We discussed this issue with other MVPs, developers, and advanced IT pros, and realized we should move from words to acts. We decided to organize a conference where the difficulty of all presentations has to be ***level 400 or above***. However, this is not a simple issue. Who should take over the responsibility for selecting the presentations? Many contemporary conferences have transposed this responsibility to attendees, and have organized voting for presentations. Many organizers care about attendance (and even profit) only, and decide to select ***pleasant*** presentations mostly. Well, we decided that the three of us are going to accept the responsibility. Dušan is selecting client side, Matevž middle tier, and I database presentations. From last year, Miha Pihler has joined us and he is responsible for selecting IT Pro presentations (and thus Bleeding Edge is not a developer-only conference anymore).

We believe that a conference should not only please, but also educate attendees. We want to show the cutting edge of current technologies. In previous conferences, we have prepared and shown many nowadays famous topics. We have shown how to use temporal data in a relational database before temporal support came to any major RDBMS. We have used appropriate multi-tiered architecture when this approach was quite new. We have used Velocity in middle tier in its very early stage of development. Analyzing social media is becoming very popular. Well, we analyzed ***all tweets in real time*** two years ago. The new Denali reporting tool Crescent that is coming by the end of this year is using Silverlight technology. Well, we have built thin Business Intelligence clients with Silverlight two years ago. And we are moving to HTML 5 this year. Anyway, the most important difference from other conferences is the fact that we did not succumb to the populism; we still maintain ***the level*** of the conference.

Besides hard work, it is important to have a rest. The parties on the conference are becoming famous as well. In addition to common parties, we are organizing surprises, small hikes, and other activities.

During high level presentations attendees encounter many questions. For the third year, we are continuing with the ***breakfast Q&A*** session. It is very popular, and for two years now, we could not accommodate enough time for all questions and discussions!

From last year, we have opened the conference for foreign speakers. However, we still enforce the technical level policy. Nevertheless, names like Dino Esposito, Itzik Ben-Gan, Davide Mauri, Ingo Rammer and David Ingham guarantee to comply with high level requirements without special effort from our side. Although it is a small conference, it is worth mentioning that just the speakers of this year's event, the Bleeding Edge 2011, have published all together more than 30 books!

Every year we also try to introduce something new. This year, we made a bond with other technical conferences in vicinity during September 2011, and offer discounts for visiting two or more events ([SQLU Summit Budapest](http://summit.solidq.com/vienna/Seiten/Home.aspx), [SQL TuneIn Zagreb](http://www.sqltunein.com/)). And, what's even more important, with help of Microsoft Slovenia, we added a content for a full second day. After our traditional Q&A breakfast, attendees are welcome to stay for the MS Build event. This is going to be one of the earliest MS Build events, right after the »big« Build event in Anaheim, CA. Microsoft will introduce new technologies for developing applications. It is worth mentioning that we did not raise the price for Bleeding Edge because of this second day. Therefore, attendees get double the content for the same price.

In short, Bleeding Edge ***is and remains*** a different conference!