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Courtesy of us.pycon.org

# PyCon 2011

PyCon is where the Python programming language meets Python personalities and serves to educate, excite, motivate, maintain, and recruit Python users and developers. *By Amber Graner*

Python celebrated its 20th birthday at PyCon 2011 [1], held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, March 9-17. PyCon proved to be three knowledge-packed events in one: The main conference days were March 11-13; those who arrived before the main event could attend tutorials [2]; those who stayed beyond the main conference days [3] enjoyed four full days of development sprints [4].

PyCon brings together users and developers and provides a catalyst for the future direction of Python, as well as the applications, distributions, and tools that rely on the Python language, but you do not have to be a Python expert to attend. At this conference, tutorials were broken into two categories: novice and experienced. Even sessions during the main event were categorized as novice, experienced, or EXTREME [5].

Attendees shared their knowledge and experience with fellow “Pythonistas” and chose from a variety of talks and panels offered in any one of five simultaneous session tracks. In addition to the session tracks, “Open Space” sessions [6] ran concurrently. Attendees also had the opportunity to present as well as attend the popular and fast-paced lightning talks. And, for the second year in a row, PyCon hosted a poster session [7] as well.

As if this weren’t enough, the main conference also hosted an Expo Hall,

where attendees could meet and speak with representatives from companies who both use and support Python, not to mention score some cool swag giveaways offered at the expo booths.

PyCon 2011 Keynote sessions [8] were delivered by Hilary Mason, lead scientist at bit.ly, and Guido van Rossum, Python creator and “Benevolent Dictator For Life” overseeing Python development. Morning and afternoon plenary sessions in the form of “Start Up” stories were given by Rian Hunter, engineer for Dropbox; David Cramer, engineer at Disqus; Jason Yan, CTO and co-founder of Disqus; Chris McAvooy, VP of Technology at Threadless; and Andy Smith, Core Developer at Openstack.

Not only did Pycon 2011 provide something for every level of interest for those in the Python community, the organizers also did a great job of keeping everyone connected to the Internet. As almost anyone who has attended an open source event can attest, the biggest challenge is often keeping everyone connected. PyCon planners relied on their on-site support staff, who monitored the location of the attendees at all times. If the majority of attendees moved to another location at the conference, the Internet access points moved with them. Other conferences wanting to achieve better connectivity at their events can take a lesson from the PyCon planners. ■■■

### INFO

- [1] PyCon 2011 Website: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/home/>
- [2] PyCon 2011 Tutorial Schedule: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/schedule/tutorials/>
- [3] Pycon 2011 Main Event Schedule: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/schedule/>
- [4] PyCon 2011 Development Sprints: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/sprints/>
- [5] Extreme PyCon Talks: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/speaker/extreme/>
- [6] PyCon “Open Space” sessions: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/openspaces/>
- [7] PyCon Poster Session: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/speaker/posters/>
- [8] PyCon Keynote Sessions and Startup Stories: <http://us.pycon.org/2011/home/keynotes/>



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