Conference Manager Editor – Manual

Version 1.0

Introduction

Welcome to the conference manager editor. Please note that the editor only needs to be used by the conference organizers, if you are attending a conference that uses the conference manager, all you have to do is download the app form Apple's iTunes App Store, start the app once it's installed, and select the appropriate conference in the app on your iPhone/iPad.

If you are a conference organizer let me first introduce you to general workflow of the application: First you input all your conference data in the editor (i.e. the authors of paper/posters etc., the sessions, tracks, and those to conference dates) while you are working with the editor you will save your work on your local system from time, but this does not mean that it would become live on your attendees iPhones yet. Therefore, once you completed the input you will deploy the database to a webserver (either your own or our servers, for details see Section "Deployment") if you later want to change something in the database you can reopen it in the conference editor and then deploy again.

Getting the editor

Currently, we support two platforms for the conference editor; Windows and Mac OS. The latest version of the editor can be downloaded from our webserver at http://www.ivda.uni-saarland.de/software/releases/confman.html scroll down the webpage and download the version for your OS. Theoretically, our code should also compile fine on other OSes that are supported by the Qt toolkit, if you want to help us to build more distributions simply send a mail and we try to get it to work.

Input

Once you download and start the editor you should see a window as shown in (Figure 1). The basic idea of entering data into the editor is to go from left to right in those tabs
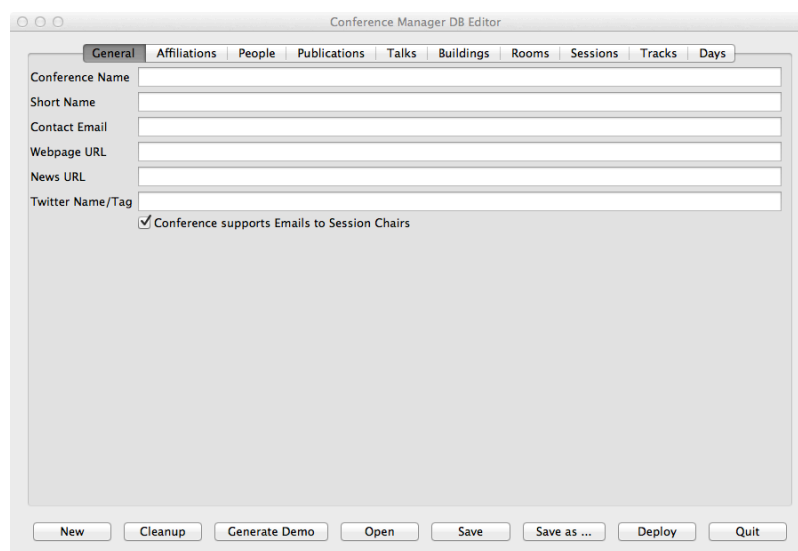

Figure 1. The conference manager UI after startup

at the top. For example you will have to enter an affiliation then use that for a person and then use that person record as an author for a publication which in turn is part of a session and so on. Certainly, you can go back to any tab at any time but keeping this general left to right order in mind is a good concept. Before we look at the tabs one after the other let's take a quick look at the buttons on the bottom of the application.

Buttons

Most of them should be obvious. "New" creates a new empty DB rejecting all the changes made (after asking you to save of course), "Cleanup" removes ALL unreferenced entries from the current DB, e.g. (a publication that is never presented, or an person that is neither an author of anything nor is chairing a session), you should use this feature to get rid of unneeded entries. Be aware that this feature works recursively, i.e. if a paper is never presented it is removed an then all of it's authors are also removed (except when they appear as authors somewhere else of course). The "generate demo" creates a small nonsense conference database with that will server as a demo for this manual mostly. "Open" loads conference database from file and "Save" and "Save as …" are used to store safe the current data, please note that saving the conference database does not make it available to the conference manager app users, that is what the "Deploy" button is meant for (more on this in the Section "Deployment" later). "Close" obviously closes the application.
Now let's go through the tabs in more detail.

The General Tab

The first tab as shown in Figure 1 is the general tab, here you enter the most basic information about the conference everything should be self explanatory except for the news URL and the "Session Chair"-checkbox at the bottom.
The checkbox globally enabled or disables a feature that allows participants to send mails to the session chairs while a session is in progress (and only while it is in progress) to ask questions about the current presentations. The idea is that the session chair would collect all those emails live and then bring them up after the presentation in the Q&A session with the presenters. Some conference organizers may think this is a great way for people to ask questions that don't feel comfortable asking them in front of the whole auditorium while others may think this feature would destroy the interaction possibilities during a conference. Here you as a conference organizer can choose what you prefer. If you enable this feature, obviously, the chairs need to have email access during the sessions and also you will have to enter the email addresses of the chairs (or some temporary email address for the sessions) into the system.
The other item in the general tab that requires explanation is the news URL. If want enable the conference news feature in the conference manager you need to enter HTTP URL here that point to a location were a news DB is stored. This news DB can be maintained by a simple news editor (that we also supply for free) and it allows the conference organizers to post news about the conference (e.g. room changes, special events) directly to the participants. If you want to use this feature please contact us separately.

The Affiliations Tab

This tab contains the entire author's, chair's, etc. affiliations. In Figure 2 you can see the tab populated with some demo data (that data came from the "Generate Demo" feature, simply click on the "Generate Demo" button to get the same data).
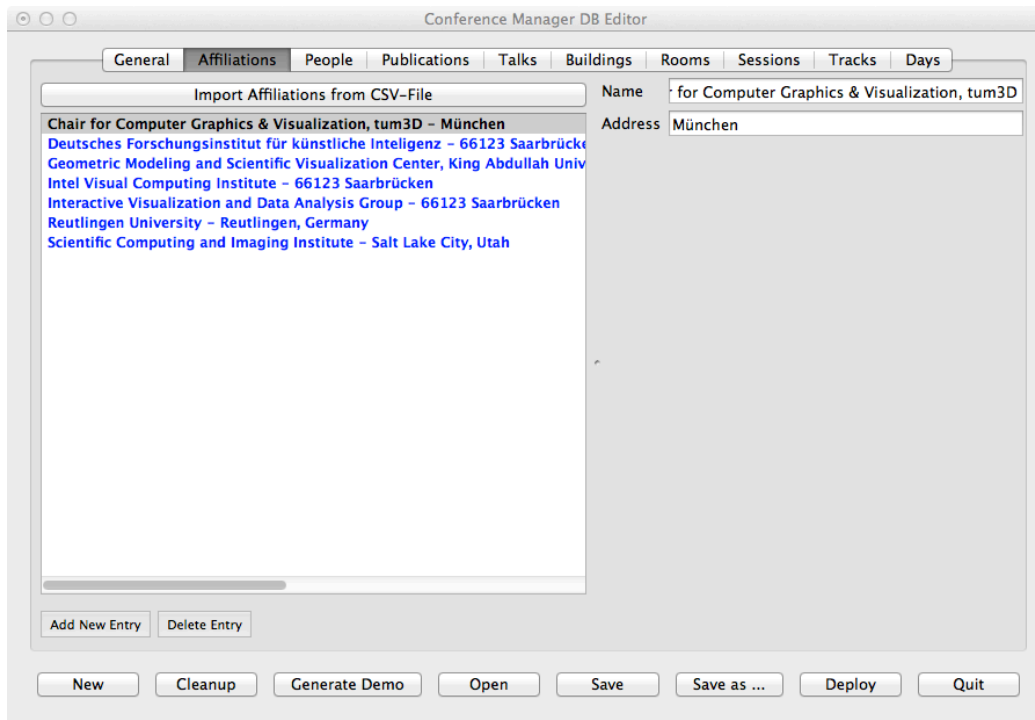
Figure 2. The Affiliations Tab filled with the demo data

With the exception of the general tab all of the tabs have the same basic layout, on the left you see the list of database entries and on the right (separated by a moveable splitter) you see the details of every entry. Notice how in Figure 2 the name and address f the first affiliation are shown. To edit the entry simply type into the edit fields on the left. To add a new affiliation click on the "Add new Entry" button on the bottom left and to delete an entry click on the "Delete entry" button. Note that you cannot delete an entry that is referenced somewhere else, for example you cannot delete an affiliation when it is still in use by an author. If you try to delete such an entry clicking the delete button will give you an error message and tell you how often the entry is still referenced. You can also recognize referenced entries in the list, any referenced entry is bold blue unreferenced entries are normal black, in the example in Figure 2 all entries are referenced somewhere. Try the "Add New entry" feature to a new affiliation, which will be unreferenced to see the difference in the list. Once you entered the affiliations of the personnel you proceed to the "People Tab". Please note again that you can return to any tab at any time, so should you need to add a new affiliation later you can always do this. The last thing to mention on this tab is the "Import from CSV file"-button. It allows you to import data from most spreadsheet applications (such as Microsoft Excel) by first saving a table as CSV file (which stands for comma separated values) and then import that file into the editor. When you click on the button the editor will first ask you if you want to save any unsaved changes (if there are any) to make sure if anything goes wrong during the import process you always return to the previous version of the database. Next the editor will ask you for the file to be imported and then it will present you with the CSV file import dialog as shown in Figure 3. This dialog has three sections: On the very top it shows the input CSV-file as plain text. Below that it shows the "would be" result of the import as it would be added to the database if one would click "OK" right now. Below that are the parameters that can be set to control the import process.

The first is the "Skip Rows" field, in this field you can specify, how many rows should be skipped from the beginning of the input file. In our example the input file contains three lines of text before the actual comma separated data starts, consequently we set this parameter to three. In the setup section below you specify the location of the data. First you can enable or disable the fields you want to import (some databases for example my only store the names of the affiliations but not the addresses) any non selected fields
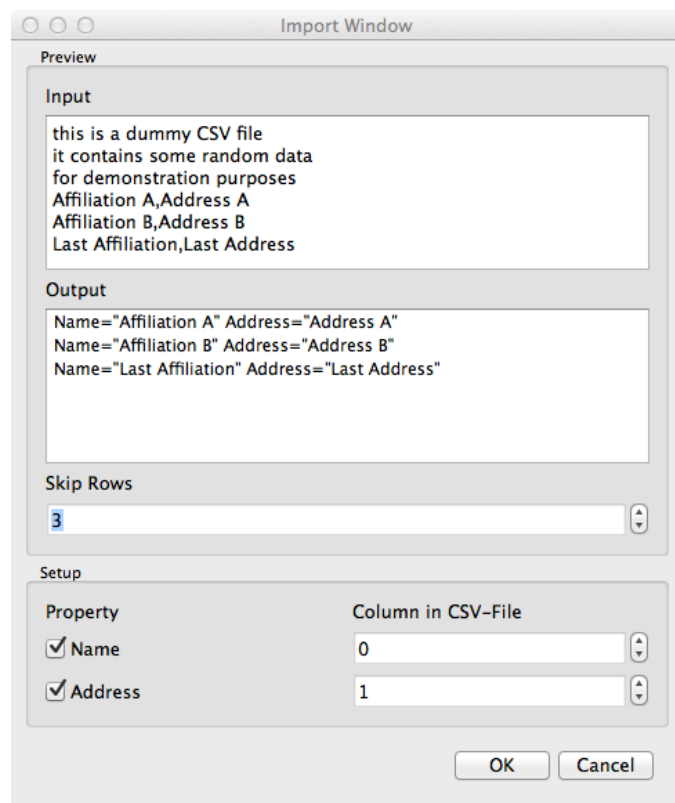

Figure 3. A sample CSV-File in the affiliations import dialog

will be left blank during import. In this case we have selected to import both "Name" and "Address" and have specified that the first row (row 0) contains the name and the second contains the address. With a quick look into the output list we can see that this choice is correct. To import the data you can click on the "OK" button, to return to the previous tab without changing anything simply click "Cancel".

People Tab

The next tab is the "People Tab" it works similar to the affiliations tab with the addition that a person can not only have text attributes such as "Last Name", "First Name" etc. but can also reference (multiple) affiliations. In Figure 4 a person record from the demo database is shown. You can see that this author (me actually ☺) has a number of affiliations. Those affiliation can be deleted and added by clicking the "Add new Entry" and "Delete Entry" buttons on the bottom LEFT. Notice that the affiliation entries are references to the affiliation data in the second tab so if you click add you are presented with a list of known affiliations, if you want to add a new one that is not in the list you have to do so in the affiliation tab. Also note that the entries are real references to the affiliations in the previous tab, so if you change an existing affiliation in the previous tab, it will automatically change in every single person that references it. Just as the affiliations tab before the people tab also feature an "Import from CSV file"-button to

import people data from an external source. Please not that for technical reasons the references to affiliations cannot be imported.
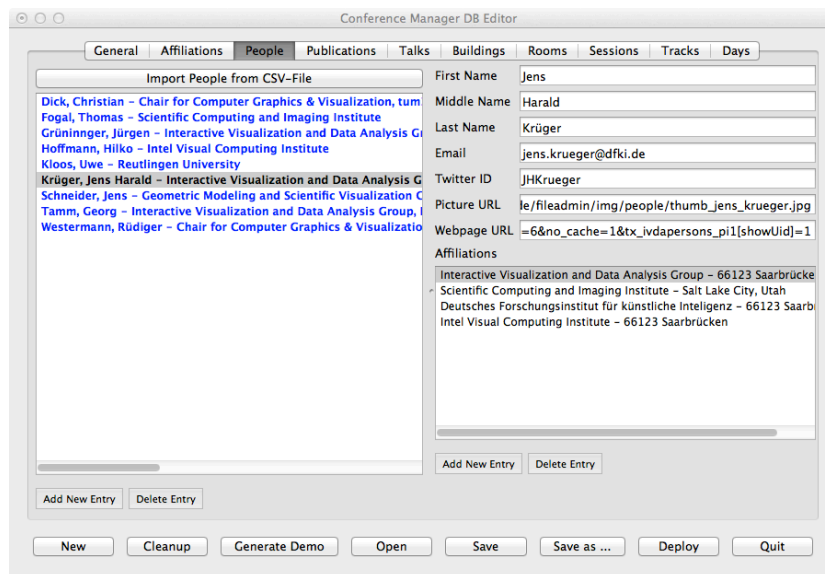

Figure 4. The People Tab

Publications Tab

The next tab works exactly as the previous two with the only exception being the publication type dialog that opens up when you click on the "Add New Entry" button on the bottom left. This dialog simply asks you if you want to add a paper or a poster publication. Please note that some conference use the concept of oral and non-oral presentations in that case you can either flag all of the non oral presentations as posters and the others as papers, or you can enter all publications as papers and simply do not at the non-oral presentation to the schedule.

Talks Tab

The talks works like the publications tab in that it holds two types of talks, paper talks and invited talks. Both types have slightly different entries. Invited talks are normally used for things like keynotes and capstones while paper talks are for the presentation of a paper. Please note that for every paper that is presented as a talk you need to create a talk entry, you cannot add a paper directly to a session but only a paper talk.

Buildings Tab

Before we get to the sessions we first need to specify the location of the sessions, therefore we first define a building list in the buildings tab. Each building has a name and global coordinates (you can use Google Maps to easily get these coordinates) as well as set of floors. Now floors are a little special. The don't only contain text data but they also require a floor plan image. Normally, you will receive those floor plan images from the organizers of the conference location (hotel, convention center, etc.) just make sure you have the rights to use those images as they will appear in the iPhone app on every attendee's device, this should not be an issue but it's can't hurt to double check with the source of the image. When you have the right of the image, please save it as a JPG (or JPEG) file. Now, when you create a new floor plan entry for a building point the editor will first ask you for that JPG image, next a name of the floor and finally the size in pixels of the pin icon. This last parameter is need to properly scale the pushpin that is rendered on top of the map on the iPhone to indicate the position of a room. One way to

find out how big the pin has to be is to open the floor plan image into an image editor (such as Microsoft Paint, Photoshop, or GIMP) and then draw a rectangle into the map that has the size appropriate size, then simply use the width of that rectangle as input in the floor plan field.

Rooms Tab

In this tab we are going to use the buildings and floor plans we created in the previous step. To create a room entry click on "Add new Entry"-Button in the bottom left as usual, enter the name of the room and select a building and floor from the drop down menus. Notice how the editor automatically loads the floor plan image. Now you can click into the floor plan image to position a pushpin onto the plan to indicate the position of the room. If the pushpin does not have the correct size, go back to the building tab and correct the pushpin's pixel size.

Other Tabs

The other following tabs work just like the previous tabs. Please simply fill in the information of you conference schedule.

Deployment

Once you have entered all of your data it is time to get the conference database to the users. Therefore, you need to use the deployment feature. This feature packs all the data of your conference together (i.e. the database itself, the floor plan images, and a conference logo) into a single zip file. When you click on deploy the system may ask you for a conference logo, for best results choose a file that is as squared as possible (width and height should be as equal as possible). Next the system will ask you to choose a directory for deployment. Now, when you are hosting the conference database yourself, then you would simply choose the directory where your webserver stores the HTML pages and you are done. The editor will package all data of the conference you just edited and will create one additional file the so-called conference metadata. If you are hosting multiple conferences on one webserver directory then this metadata file coordinates those multiple conferences. The metadata file also keeps track of the versions of you conference, so every time you edit something and re-deploy it will know that a new version has been deployed and this will be forwarded to the iPhones so that they know they need to update their cached copies of the conference data.

If you are not hosting the data, i.e. either we are doing that for you (ask us about details) or someone else hosts the database for you, you should simply deploy to a local directory and then send the metadata file in that directory and the zip file of the conference to the hoster (for example via email).