

Designed by New York architect and Kennedy family friend, Phillip Johnson, the Kennedy Memorial, in the Dallas Historic District, resembles an open tomb. Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau photo.



# Dallas Conference Preview

**Dario Nardi**  
2009 APTi  
Conference Chair

I remember vividly my first conference experience in Kansas City over ten years ago. As I had hoped, this conference was a fantastic opportunity to hear experts, chat with authors and experienced type users, peek at a multitude of helpful products, and even tour Kansas City (my first time outside a west coast state!). With each conference since then, I have confirmed that gathering hundreds of folks to talk about type and share experiences is a rare and wonderful event.

That said, when I attended the most recent conference in Baltimore – knowing that I would be the next conference chair – I discovered that people attend in order to meet a variety of needs, and not all of these needs have been met at every conference. As good as the conferences have been, we can do an even better job! That is why I am so excited to share with you some observations, plans, and hopes for APTi's 2009 conference in Dallas. These points are not just from me; they come from attendees, those who have never attended, the APTi Board, our international chapters, and the local Dallas chapter.

As I share information with you as conference planning progresses over the next 16 months, I hope to answer the

question, "Why attend a type conference?" If you have not had the opportunity to attend, you may wonder how you will benefit, besides having an educational trip. As Conference Chair, here are my four main goals:

- Provide you with practical applications.
- Offer a lot of interactivity to get the most out of your experience.
- Make more space for complementary interests.
- Ensure the conference has personal meaning for you.

We have picked a welcoming hotel and are implementing improvements to the organization of the conference in order to meet these goals.

## Hello, Dallas!

Dallas is a bustling modern city; the conference hotel, the Fairmont, is classy with a simple, airy, yet cozy layout. We will be taking over the hotel! All the sessions will be on the same level, and there is plenty of casual open space to sit and relax to encourage catching up with friends or meeting new folks. It was really important to me to find a spot that we could "make our own" – no trudging around maze-like halls or navigating through throngs of folks from other conferences. Having our own space will foster interaction and closeness. In addition to being well-sized for APTi, the Fairmont offers free wireless Internet and delicious sit-down and buffet meals.

We will be in downtown Dallas, centrally located, with easy access by foot and trolley to eateries, museums, and clubs. I rode the trolley myself to ensure that it is a fun, convenient experience. For those of you interested in sightseeing and cultural activities, there are many venues around downtown Dallas. The Majestic is a live-performance space. Swirl, located off Main Street, allows folks to bottle their own wine! There is a women's museum and one of America's premiere sculpture museums. For sports-lovers, we are looking into pre-season football tickets for the Dallas Cowboys. We will provide a convenient map for you to find these tantalizing hot-spots.

## Providing Wisdom

You are an expert, too! At the Baltimore conference, I heard from folks who were attending in order to chat with other folks of like type, or with someone who is the same type as a loved-one or co-worker with whom they were having a problem. These folks wanted to receive insight (wisdom) about that person in their life. Thus, “experts” aren’t always official presenters. Each person is an expert in his or her own type, as well as a repository of experiences and advice regarding their relationships. To help people meet their needs of hearing from others, you will be able to attend “Wisdom of Type” panels. Each panel will feature folks who can discuss work and relationships as they speak on questions received from the audience.

A conference is also a wonderful opportunity to watch recognized type experts in action. I have noticed that people love to listen in as a type expert provides insight and advice on issues brought to them, usually at a workshop’s end, over dinner, etc. It is almost as if the “meatiest” stuff is between the sessions, rather than within them. Right now, we are working on how to best showcase (model) the expert use of type during the conference.

## Meeting Your Learning Needs

Do you ever wonder what to review before attending a conference session? Do you want to make sure that the session you signed up for really covers what you expected?

Presently, sessions follow a labeling scheme of Basic, Intermediate, or Advanced. Although this scheme has worked fairly well for many years, the pallet of type has grown in ways that can defy these labels. For example, knowledge of MBTI® Step II does not imply familiarity with Jung’s 8-function model. People may attend a session with high hopes and enthusiasm, only to discover it is above or below their readiness level or needs.

When registering for the Dallas conference, you will find clear information



on what model(s) you should already be familiar with for a session; what model(s) will be covered in the session; and which sessions will offer you the opportunity to catch up before tackling applications.

To help make this happen, a handful of 3-hour sessions will be clearly labeled as two 90-minute sections that people can join or leave as it suits their learning level and goals. For example, the first 90 minutes of a 3-hour session on Step II would introduce folks to this use of the MBTI instrument, while the second 90 minutes would cover applications of Step II and assume the knowledge covered in the first half. This way, if you are already familiar with Step II you can join later and get just what you need, while those who are new to Step II can join earlier and perhaps even switch to an introductory session on another model during the second half of the session.

## Welcoming the Entire Type Family

Since I joined APTi in 1993, the pallet of type tools has expanded to become incredibly rich and varied. At the forefront is the MBTI assessment. You may also be familiar with MBTI® Step II and the soon-to-be-released Step III. Type also includes Carl Jung’s original work on type development, archetypes, and the eight mental functions (aka function-attitudes, cognitive processes, or type dynamics). Many type users also rely on Temperament Theory, DISC / interaction styles, Neuro-linguistic Programming, and Ericksonian methods (for therapy, sales, or other applications). The Enneagram has also become more popular, as have frameworks grounded in cognitive-behavioral sciences,

Through paintings, sculpture and other media, The Dallas Museum of Art surveys the art of the Americas and exhibits an international collection of works from Europe, Asia and Africa. Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau photo.

---

A few minutes with the morning paper, TV news, or blog sites will quickly reveal there are real and sharp differences in the world today.

---

### Sharing the Practical Benefits of Type

Here are ways that type knowledge improves daily life:

- Deeper relationships with children, family, and friends
- Advice on career choice, team-work skills, and improved work flow on the job;
- Improved management and leadership skills.
- Knowledge on assessments to use to track and catalyze satisfaction.
- Finding deeper meaning to life in general.

For the conference, we will be focusing on selecting sessions and speakers that deliver on these practical applications. When you meet someone who expresses curiosity about the conference, please consider mentioning these benefits.

career counseling, and personal coaching. Although psychological type will always be at the forefront, there is room at the table to learn from – and provide insight to – those who have found usefulness in models that complement type.

## Interactivity

The term “interactive” means, “Acting with others in a two-way system, often with continuous exchange and feedback.” The benefit of interactivity is heightened by memorable learning experiences, as well as opportunities to meet new people and live a concept in addition to hearing about it.

Creating an interactive experience for hundreds of people simultaneously may sound daunting. However, there are highly effective options. I am most intrigued by an open-space exercise around Interaction Style (the DISC model as adapted to the 16 types by Linda Berens). Several years ago, I participated in such an exercise. The interaction styles model sorts the 16 types into four groups. INTJs, such as me, fall into the Chart the Course style (which is “C” in the DISC vernacular). Who else shares this style? INFJ, ISTJ, and ISTP. What a wonderful experience it was to work with types that are normally separated into different groups. All four style groups had roughly equal numbers. No one felt isolated, and many people – including long-time type users – reported after the event how much they discovered about themselves.

There are other ways to encourage interactivity. I foresee the poster session as a little bit more like a “cracker barrel” experience – a mini-lecture with Q&A – so researchers will not need to keep repeating the same brief explanations, and more people will have time to explore the poster topic. Storytelling can also be interactive. But I don’t want to spoil the surprise....

## The Constructive Use of Differences

A few minutes with the morning paper, TV news, or blog sites will quickly reveal there are real and sharp differences in the world today. Some differences may feel abstract, such as stem cell research. Other differences, though geographically distant, such as Pakistan or Darfur, remind us that blind action to eliminate differences can encourage hate and lead to incredible suffering. Yet more differences, such as views on climate change, will likely hold profound consequences for all people decades to come.

Also, each of us encounters many small differences daily: children are not their parents, nor are spouses identical in all things. Employees and students often hold differing expectations about work and school. One student of mine interviewed ten people in her local church to discover why they attended. She looked at temperament among other factors; to no surprise, all ten attended for reasons that were personal, cultural, and type-related. None of us escape the small differences, and just knowing about those differences is often not enough. We need ways to move forward.

Instead of berating differences or pretending they do not exist, Carl Jung, Isabel Myers, and others have embraced diversity, hoping that constructive action will make the best use of the real differences that may divide people. For all these reasons, I felt that “The Constructive Use of Differences,” would be a timely and powerful theme to convey how type remains very relevant to people’s lives in the larger world.

## You Are Invited...

If you are a conference regular, I look forward to helping make this among your best type conferences yet. If you have not been to an international conference – or you have not been for some time – consider the amazing experience that is in store for you. Please stay tuned over the next 16 months. As the conference takes shape, I will continue to share what an inspiring and satisfying experience it will be. If you have thoughts to share, please feel free to contact me. ■