

## **SA Geek Camp 2017 Post-Camp Report**

### **Geek Camp's Purpose**

*"To carry the message to the still suffering lust addict by the appropriate use of information technology."*

### **Introduction**

Geek Camp brought together 651 members of SA from around the world for a 24 hour online video and audio convention. It was held over 24 hours on 23rd & 24th of August 2017. This pioneering event enabled SA members to share their experience strength and hope, without borders, in a series of panel talks, shares and workshops. SA members from the USA shared with members in UK, Europe, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, and other countries. On another channel, workshops engaged members in Latin America, Ireland, Israel, France, Russia and Belgium. Members connected to the internet from their homes or workplaces, using smartphones, tablets or computers, to hear the message of recovery relayed around the globe. In cities such as Durban (South Africa), Limerick (Ireland) and Bournemouth (UK), "nodes" were created where members met in small groups to tune into the event together. For one, twenty four hour period, the arms of SA were spread wide, indeed globally, using the internet. New friendships were formed, the message of recovery was carried and new audio recordings were made for future dissemination.

### **Brief History**

Planning for Geek Camp began in Feb 2017, initially by a small group of SA members. The project was adopted by EMER later the same month. Teams were soon developed for publicity, network administration, loner and program administration. Planning teleconferences were held monthly. A dedicated Geek Camp website was set up using WordPress and hosted on the same server as the EMER website. The initial plan for a mainly IT related event was soon modified to appeal to a more general audience. The initial plan for three themed channels was eventually reduced to two and other simplifications were made. Channel A was redesigned based on the SA Service structure and this proved to be a breakthrough. Channel B comprised workshops on both general and technical topics. Plans for deployment of simultaneous translation rooms were later abandoned as too complicated. Rehearsals began using Jitsi, an online audio/visual sharing platform. The schedule began to come together and was continually published and updated online. A technical support channel was added at the last moment and this proved to be another blessing.

### **Camp Progress**

The Camp began on schedule at 09.00 UTC on 23 August. Twenty four one hour Panels of 2-5 speakers ran consecutively on Channel A. All SA Regions, with the exception of PSR, were presented plus other parts of the service structure. Speakers met in a Jitsi room and their output was streamed onto a web page, where it could be viewed by the audience. Difficulties were

experienced by some panel speakers, particularly by those who had not studied their instructions or rehearsed adequately. However the main problem on Channel A was insufficient capacity of the website server to provide for the number of viewers. This was resolved during the Camp by moving the Geek Camp website to a higher capacity server.

Channel B featured workshops, fellowship and entertainment. Here participants were all in the same Jitsi room and it soon became apparent that the practical capacity of the room was about 25 people, which was obviously inadequate considering the numbers wishing to participate. Arrangements were made to stream Channel B onto the same page as Channel A and all Camp participants were informed by email. This relieved the problem somewhat but Channel B remained the source of most frustration for both workshop leaders and participants. However most of the workshops were completed as planned and enjoyed by their audiences.

The technical support Channel, which had been added as a last minute thought, proved to be an important factor in the success of the Camp. It was the place to go for anyone experiencing frustration, technical or otherwise. Being also hosted in a Jitsi room and manned by SA members, it provided both on the spot troubleshooting, technology coaching and emotional support for speakers and viewers alike.

Most members connected to the Camp as individuals but other came together in physical groups (nodes) to participate. Although not as major a feature of the Camp as expected, those who participated in a node seem to have experienced an extra level of enjoyment.

### **Feedback**

Over 100 participants responded favourably to the post Camp survey.

- [Feedback - Highlights](#)
- [Feedback - Improvements](#)
- [Feedback - Summary](#)

### **Acknowledgements**

More than 90 members volunteered to assist with preparations for the Camp and many did so by helping to publicize the event, forming the group conscience at business meetings, sharing in specific-to-task whatsapp groups or acting as extras at online rehearsals. Those who so participated benefitted doubly from the Camp. Beyond this, four members made outstanding contributions to the success of the event:

- Daniel T (Rehearsals and technical support)
- Laurens A (Speaker recruitment)
- Marsha D (Publicity and website)
- Tzvi S (Technical coordination of the whole Camp)

## **Statistics**

651 Registered for the Camp: 584 (English Database) + 67 (Persian Database)

952 Unique page views of the Camp stream page

533 Unique users of the Camp stream page (24 hrs of Channel A and 14.5 hrs of Channel B)

83 Panel Speakers

24 Panels

11 Regions

21 Workshop Leaders

14 Workshops

9 Channel Coordinators

3 Tech Support

1 Camp Coordinator

0 Cost

## **Key Lessons Learned**

1. The event succeeded in its mission
2. The camp was extremely popular and exceptional value for money
3. The technology worked well, though mid-camp enhancements were necessary
4. Harnessing the organization and discipline of SA's Service Structure was key
5. Excellent technical support is indispensable for such an online event
6. Many participants overcame their fear of appearing on camera
7. A powerful sense of worldwide fellowship can be achieved by an online event
8. There is significant demand for more events of this kind
9. WhatsApp Groups can be used very effectively to support specific service activities
10. Jitsi is an easy to use, versatile platform for up to 25 participants, but not more
11. All Channels should be streamed on a single password-protected webpage
12. Many users failed to receive or to notice email delivered via MailChimp
13. Many volunteered to help prepare the Camp but only a handful stayed the course
14. Good access to the SA service structure was key for speaker recruitment
15. General interest topics are more popular than technology topics
16. Geek Camp is probably too techie a title for the event
17. Further automation of registration and password dissemination is needed

## **Recommendations**

1. Geek Camp should be renamed, re-parented somewhere within the international service structure of SA and run on a regular annual, half yearly or quarterly basis.
2. The present rather limited streaming of SA International Conventions should be extended using the technologies employed during Geek Camp (streaming of multiple channels from a single webpage, use of chat for Q&A, channel for fellowship, technical support channel).

3. Geek Camp technology should be routinely used for General Delegate Assemblies, BOT and international committee meetings, to encourage interest and/or participation in international service work.

### **Conclusion**

Geek Camp was very well received by the SA community. It brought together members from diverse continents and cultures. The Jitsi audio/visual platform proved to be an effective way to share and carry the SA message from one Region into another. Initial reservations about anonymity were addressed and this proved helpful. The Camp helped to build the SA fellowship worldwide, bringing together speakers and audiences who might otherwise never meet. Loners were able to listen live to speakers with long-term sobriety. It helped break down barriers of geographical isolation especially in areas where the fellowship had only recently been established. Geek Camp extended the hand of recovery across the world.

*“So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we’re not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.”  
From Dr Bob’s farewell message.*

### **Links**

- [SA Geek Camp Website](#)
- [SA Geek Camp Jitsi Channel](#)

### **Key Documents**

- [SA Geek Camp 2017 Schedule](#)
- [Register of Camp Participants](#) [Persian Register](#) (both restricted access)
- [Register of Nodes](#) (restricted access)
- [Preserving Anonymity and Confidentiality](#)
- [Geek Camp Participant’s Guide](#)
- [Geek Camp Panel Speaker’s Guide](#)
- [Geek Camp Troubleshooting Guide](#)

### **Milestones & Minutes of Planning Meetings**

- [Teleconference #1 Minutes 6 Feb 2017](#)
- 6 Feb Network Admin Team formed
- 7 Feb Publicity Team formed
- 20 Feb EMER’s IT Committee agreed to parent Geek Camp
- 13 Mar Loner Admin Team formed
- 14 Mar Geek Camp start date/time agreed: 23 Aug 2017 at 09:00 UTC
- [Teleconference #2 Minutes 14 Mar 2017](#) [Recording \(incomplete\)](#)
- 27 Mar [SA Geek Camp website](#) deployed and linked from [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org)
- 3 Apr Persian translations of the GC Web Page and Program published on [sa-iran.org](http://sa-iran.org)
- 9 Apr GC Website hosting switched to EMER’s server
- 10 Apr GC Node Directory opened for entries. [Node entry form](#).

- [Teleconference #3 Minutes 25 Apr 2017](#) [Recording](#)
- 29 Apr Persian-Speaking Region (PSR) set up a Geek Camp Committee
- 1 May Southwest Region (SWR) agreed to Regional participation in Geek Camp
- 4 May First rehearsal of Channel C completed using [Jitsi](#)
- 5 May Program for Channel A redrafted to suit a more general audience
- 12 May All SA Regions plus SAICO, GDA, etc. invited to host Channel A panels
- 15 May First rehearsal of Channels A&B completed using YouTube streaming
- 17 May [2nd edition audio about Geek Camp](#) published and distributed
- 23 May 80 signed up for the Camp
- [Teleconference #4 Minutes 25 May 2017](#) [Recording](#)
- 4 Jun SA IT Committee established its Channel A panel.
- ITC Members invited to lead workshops. sa.org webmaster accepts
- 8 Jun SA PI Committee agrees to run a workshop on “How to do SA PI”
- 14 Jun Registrations exceed 100
- 19 Jun Registration system for Persian members begun
- [Teleconference #5 Minutes 22 Jun 2017](#) [Recording](#)
- 5 Jul [Polish GC Flyer](#) published
- 7 Jul [Spanish GC Flyer](#) published
- 14 Jul GC discussed at the GDA
- 15 Jul Revised guidelines for [preserving anonymity and confidentiality at GC](#) drafted
- 17 Jul Registrations exceed 200
- [Videoconference #6 Minutes 20 Jul 2017](#) [Recording](#)
- 28 Jul Persian-Speaking Region votes not to participate for political reasons
- 14 Aug Board of Trustees briefed about the Camp
- 15 Aug English registrations exceed 300. Persian registrations exceed 80.
- 16 Aug c. 40 participate in a flash rehearsal
- [Videoconference #7 Minutes 17 Aug 2017](#)
- 18 Aug Access links and guidance sent to [participants](#) and [speakers](#)
- 21 Aug registrations exceed 500
- 21 Aug all Persian-speaking participants validated and sent links
- 23 Aug Camp began as planned with registrations exceeding 600
- 23 Aug Geek Camp website moved to a higher capacity server
- 23 Aug Channel B streamed onto the same page as Channel A. All participants informed.
- 24 Aug Camp ends as planned
- [Wash Up Videoconference #8 31 Aug 2017](#) [Recording](#)

Respectfully submitted,  
 Nicholas S  
 6 Sep 2017