

Scala Meets the Partners at International Conference

Written by Marco Attard
03 October 2013

Digital signage must be fairly close to a religion for Scala-- explaining the company's turning a hall in the Zuiderkerk, the 17th century church at the Amsterdam Nieuwmarkt, into the temple to the industry that was its 2013 International Conference.



In attendance were 293 visitors, together with mix of exhibitors occupying a second floor.

Following a vaguely surreal opening musical act starring a gospel trio and an MC clad in priestly garb was the keynote from Scala CEO Tom Nix titled "What Was, Still Is & Will Be." Effectively an analysis of the state of the digital signage industry today, Nix repeatedly insisted of the importance of partners within vertical markets, particularly in these post-2008 market crash days.

According to Nix 2013 sees Scala customer numbers growing by 21%, with the average order growing by 10%-- in other words, signs of a growth market. Engagement, analytics and SaaS represent key opportunities, as do the shift towards market verticals and the evolution of the average signage customer, leading to what Nix calls the "customer experience engines" of tomorrow.

But what does one mean with such a statement? Later on the second day Nix tells us a more clear answer. The future, Scala hopes, will see the hardware-software mix evolve from mere equipment into "experiences," with signage providers becoming closer to creative consultants.

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Or at least those making use of Scala products, we assume.



"We are at a transformative moment for the signage," Nix continues, before telling us at the moment 15% of partners create what he describes as "Oscar winning" content. The future should see 30-40% reaching such standards, with such quality being the difference between Scala partners and the rest of the competition.

A second message drilled throughout the conference (and the subject matter of over half of the 16 talks that took place) is the importance of retail for the industry. According to invidis director Florian Rotberg retail is the top industry vertical, with 44% 2013 global market share (banking, the second placer, clocks at 13%, followed by transportation at 8%).

Not that the other market verticals are not important, the Scala CEO insists to us. after all, it is easier for partners to specialise nowadays than, say, 10 years ago. But one certainly cannot ignore the retailer-shaped elephant in the room, not when the likes of Nieman Marcus and MediaMarkt-Saturn are implementing big Scala-powered systems.

Further conference events included hardware and software demos (including a preview of the 10.1 update on Scala Enterprise), award presentations and, in the end of the first day, a thank you in the shape of champagne poured by a particularly flexible aerial artiste. In other words, it was quite a success. Roll on International Scala Conference 2015.

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