What is An HHC?

Introduction

The acronym HHC means Hewlett-Packard Handheld Conference. HHC is the general term used by members of CHHU and PPC who sponsor an annual conference, usually in September, dedicated to Hewlett-Packard Calculators and Handhelds. The first HHC was held at the HP Santa Clara Sales Office (northern California) on September 22, 1979. HP had introduced the HP-34C in July of that year and one of its most exciting new calculator features was the general version of the HP Solver.

HP worked with a consultant for the numerical work for the solver, UCB Professor William Kahan (http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~wkahan/). In 1979 this was a remarkable feat for a calculator and I remember everyone being glued to their chairs as John Kennedy and Prof. Kahan exchanged questions and answers about the various issues and techniques used by the solver. Namier Shamas, at HHC 2005, gave an excellent updated presentation on the many (now) variations of the solver of most of HP's models since the HP-34C. Much of this kind of information, obtained first hand and recorded in the Conference proceedings, is NOT readily available on the Internet.

These Conferences are international Conferences in the sense that serious HP calculator users from other countries usually attend. When the Handheld and Portable Computer Club, HPCC, was formed in London in March 1982, a tradition of sorts began. The HPCC has held a more formal conference every five years since. They hold annual meetings, but the major conferences are held in years ending in two and seven. They tend to use the Acronym HPCCUC where the UC is User's Conference. A formal list of these conferences may be found on the HHC website. A link is provided on page two.

Purpose and goals of an HHC

The primary goal of the HHC's is to provide a snap shot and documentation of the Hewlett-Packard User Community, HPUC, and activity during the previous year. The conferences attract engineers and marketing professionals from HP in addition to members of the HPUC. HP has participated in all but one or two conferences (the lean years?). The 1999 HHC was especially memorable because HP gave every participant an HP49g! The primary purpose of the conference is to have fun.

The 31 HHCs that have been held to date are non-profit activities that happen because the members of the HP User Community donate their time and resources to organize them. The cost for attendees over the years has ranged from zero (HHC 2005) to $50 depending on where the meeting is held. The primary goal is to financially break even.

Why should I attend HHC 2006?

If you have an interest in HP calculators or handhelds you will find like minded people at the HHC. The style of the conference, as it has been since the first, is open, informal, and friendly. You may learn a great deal about HP calculators from the Internet, but there is no substitute from learning from people in person. You will find that they are practical people with a sincere interest in technology and problem solving. The HHC is also a very unusual opportunity to personally meet with and talk to the folks at HP who make the decisions of design, service, and support of HP's handheld products. In today's world this is unusual indeed.

In addition to providing a great social environment the HHC also provides a focal point for users to complete and report on their projects. Internet websites provide vital information. Exchanging email is a great way to remain connected to people with similar interests, however meeting the people you read

about and talking to them in person is an experience that you can't match even with your Skype Video contact.

I mentioned the first HHC in 1979 above. I will bet that anyone who "learned" about the solver from Professor Kahan at that conference will remember it. You simply can't beat being there and hearing of the latest ideas involving HP Handhelds from the leaders of the HP Community.

In recent years we have had a web site provided by Joseph K. Horn at;

<p style="text-align:center"><a>http://holyjoe.net/hhc2006/</p>

Eric smith has set up an HHC Conference List that allows interested HP users to discuss HHC related topics. You may join the list (there is no cost) at the URL listed below. Anyone may post to the list and all those who are on the list will receive the email. Opinions on Conference decisions are best discussed here because every Committee member is on the list and will receive the message. There is a similar list for the HPCC Conference and it is good to sign up for both. Often interesting news is shared on the list and certainly the most active time for the list is the months just before and after the Conference. Thanks Eric for providing this valuable service to the HPUC.

<p style="text-align:center"><a>http://lists.handheld.org/mailman/listinfo/hhc</p>

Recent History of HHC's

The website for the years from 2003 forward are still on line and you simply change the year to view the web site using the link above. The conference details may be found there and last year we were able to take a group photograph for the first time. You will also find a conference report posted on these websites and I highly recommend that you read it, and the introduction to discover what you may have missed at past conferences. See the group photo in the HHC 2005 Report. You may use the links below to read what is available.

HHC 2005
    Report – http://holyjoe.net/hhc2005/HHC2005ConferenceReportRevC.pdf

HHC 2004
    Introduction – http://holyjoe.net/hhc2004/HHC_2004.pdf
    Report – http://holyjoe.net/hhc2004/HHC2004ConferenceReport.pdf

HHC 2003
    Report – http://holyjoe.net/hhc2003/HHC2003Report.pdf

Who attends the HHC's?

An HHC is an amateur conference. That means that it us unusual to convince your employer to fund your trip. You have to do that yourself. This alone is a good measure of your strong interest in HP Handhelds. The conference is held during an intense full weekend to avoid having to take vacation days from work. This idea has worked well for the last 27 years. Who are these HHC attendees? They are authors of books, they are hardware enthusiasts, and programmers. Some of them are professionals that heavily use HP Handhelds on a daily basis such as surveyors. They include the webmasters of the HP supporting websites you have visited on the Internet. A few attendees are in the business of providing accessories and support for HP's handhelds. They are also professors and teachers, and all of them are "students." The latter is true because no matter how smart you are or how much you know about HP Handhelds, you will find someone at the conference who will teach you something.

What happens at an HHC? – Additional details

You will get a very good idea of what happens at an HHC by reading the website reports listed above. Each year is different but there is a general theme and set of activities that have been part of nearly every HHC.

Additional information and ideas on this topic may be found on the HHC 2003 website, specifically at:

http://holyjoe.net/hhc2003/The_Value_of_Attending_An_HHC_Conference.pdf

Here is a brief list of activities (additional details in the article at the link above) in no special order.

Demonstrations of new equipment	"How to" Workshops	Programming Contests
Introductions of new models	Model Comparison Analysis	Poster Displays
Door prize drawings	HP Panel Q & A	Technical Talks
"What Is This" contests	Calculator Collection displays	Field Trips
Dinners & Awards	Best Speaker Awards	Tests and Analysis Of Products
Problem Solutions	HP Calc Disassembly & Repair	Resource Collections

Noteworthy memories of past HHCs

Here are few historical and memorial events that have occurred at past HHC's.

HHC 1979 in Santa Clara. The first Conference. Professor William Kahan tells us about the development of the HP-34C Solver. HP provided the meeting facilities.

HHC 1981 in Corvallis. HP opens the factory the previous Friday and gives the 180 attendees a complete tour with souvenirs. A very large number of employees were "standing guard" at every turn to protect company secrets. We had an HP hosted picnic in HPs "front yard."

HHC 1983 in Las Vegas. HP presents HP-IL. The escalator to the 2nd floor Saturday dinner was broken. Joe Bell diagnosed smoker Tom Hooper would be dead in a week if heart surgery was not done. Tom had quadruple bypass surgery performed the following Wednesday at the UCLA medical center. Joe Bell was right!

HHC 1991 in Corvallis. Alonzo Gariepy made us turn the cameras off during an impromptu Saturday evening presentation as he discussed ongoing speech-recognition software development techniques at Microsoft.

HHC 1992 in London. Raan Young demonstrated the HP95LX's ability to communicate wirelessly by transmitting a message literally "around the world" and back to the pager on his belt.

HHC 1996 in Anaheim. We had two concurrent tracks, one for handhelds (palmtops), one for calculators. HP had just moved to Singapore and had abandoned calculator development.

HHC 1997 in London. HP was about ready to form ACO (November 1, 1997) and secretly interviewed (and hired) Cyrille de Brebisson, Jean-Yeves Avenard , and Gerald Squelart. The development path for the HP49 was "predicted."

HHC 1999 in Vancouver. HP gave each attendee an HP49g. Nearly all of the HP49 Beta testers attended.

HHC 2000 in Los Angeles. Making a point with HP's lack of an HP49g Poster one was produced just for the conference. The floor to ceiling version may be seen on the front wall in the Conference photos. Teachers took home a normal three foot sized poster.

HHC 2001 in Chicago. The Conference was cut to one day due to 9-11 four days earlier. Saturday evening was concluded at Ace Metal Products. Fred Valdez was supposed to attend to announce the HP Business Model but he couldn't get a flight.

HHC 2002 in London. Fred Valdez outlined the new HP Business Model traveling to meet European Distributors. The *RCL 20* book was written and published for the Conference. This was the most documented conference ever with nine additional documentation achievements.

HHC 2003 in Newport Beach. Joseph Horn presented a new PDQ algorithm and "gives" it to HP after Spending over a decade of work on it.

HHC 2004 in San Jose. We published the talk synopses and the Conference Schedule before the Conference for the first time. Everyone was given an HP33S by HP.

HHC 2005 in Chicago. The CHIP Chapter sponsored the first no cost HHC. They also produced the Conference CD in record time using the latest HP CD label making technology.

Videographing HHC's

Jaake Schwartz has been video taping HPUC meetings for nearly two decades. He has taped many HHC's and recently Jake has begun the task of converting the video tape media to DVD's. You may see his list at:

http://www.pahhc.org/video.htm

It is really great to be able to put a face to an author's name after reading a good resource related to one of HP's calculators. This is possible because we start each Conference with an introduction asking each attendee to give his or her name, where they are from, why they came, what machines are of interest to them, and what their special interests are. If you read about an HP calculator patent – a very good source to see what HP is up to – you will most likely find the inventor attending an HHC.

Who from HP has attended past HHC's?

Here is a partial list of HP Managers, Engineers, and product developers who have attended HHC's and have given a talk. Many of these people have been to several HHC's over the years.

Jean-Yves Avenard	Ted Dickens	Nancy Ullman
Roy Bryzlowski	Jim Donnelly	Dennis York
Ron Brooks	Henry Horn	Raan Young
Diana Byrne	Kheng Joo Khaw	Feng Yuan
Janet Cryer	Greg Sanker	Eric Vogel
Cyrille de Brebisson	Gerld Squelart	Bill Wickes

Prizes and gifts

HP and other companies involved in calculators and support products donate items to be used as door prizes. Thanks to HP we always have several "high end" machines to give away as random drawn door prizes, as best speaker awards, etc. Often we have so many door prizes that there are more prizes than attendees and the tickets are dumped into the pot and drawn again. On several occasions HP has given every attendee a machine and some of these examples are listed above (1999, 2004). Dealers have been very generous over the years and this is another source of door prizes. Our attendees often donate machines and we had new machines

Fig. 1. — HHC 1998 HP gift for all.

from people last year who couldn't make the conference, but they wanted to "do their share" because they enjoyed a past conference so much. This must be an American "thing" as the UK group doesn't get into door prizes as enthusiastically as we do. Of course everyone likes to get a nice memento from the conference. One of my favorites is a small compass given by HP at HHC 1998. The compass is mounted in a wooden block with a cover that fits so seamlessly that you cannot see how to slide it open. When I first saw it I could not figure out that it was not simply a block of hardwood with the HP Logo burned into it. See figure 1 above.

Financing an HHC

Since all work that goes into making an HHC happen is voluntary there are no costs involved for the work. The largest single cost is the meeting facilities which vary greatly from location to location. This is another reason we need to know approximately how many people to expect. We have had meeting rooms so packed that there was standing room only. Having all activities in one location such as a hotel greatly facilitates the fellowship that is a prime objective of the Conference. Hotel meeting rooms are expensive and highly dependent on how many room nights are involved because most hotels will discount the meeting room cost proportional to the number of room nights. The tradeoff between lodging room Vs meeting room costs is also a vital consideration for the Conference location. Of course someone has to be the "banker" and accept financial responsibility for all the costs involved and that is also a volunteer job.

We charge a registration fee based on the costs involved. These include printing the proceedings, or as in recent years, assembling a Conference CD; Meeting Room costs; materials such as paper, punches, tape, etc,; audio visual aids; and any food if included.

We have done pretty well with managing the costs for most of the conferences. On occasion, however, we have a higher than planned cost, and we have had to raffle off a door prize to raise money to pay the bills. This has happened once or twice over the years as we don't have much "fat" in the budget. All finance costs and revenues are open and public; any interested party, for what ever reason, may have the information.

Conclusion

The purpose of an HHC is to share what you know with others who have similar interests and have to fun doing it. These conferences happen because each participant feels as if he or she is part of the HP User Community "family." You will notice some of the names that Jake lists as participants in his pahhc.org video list (see link on page 4 above) go back decades. These Conferences are an incredible opportunity to make new friends and develop life long friendships. Meeting with people, breaking bread with them, and learning from them is an experience I guarantee that you will not forget. All HP Handheld enthusiasts are invited to attend and to participate in any aspect of the conference that is of interest. I hope to see you in San Jose California for HHC 2006. This Conference will be remembered (historically) as a very good "turning point" in the future of HP calculator development. That much I can promise you.

X < > Y,

Richard J. Nelson
Santa Clarita California
Cell: (661) 645-7827
rjnelson@aemf.org
July 4, 2006