



Rob Grawe

SAFETY AND TRAINING

ESMO 2019: Q&A With Rob Grawe of AEP

Rob Grawe is leading a panel presentation on underground systems at ESMO 2019.

Nikki.Chandler, Amy Fischbach | Oct 02, 2018



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In June 2019, utility professionals from more than 40 countries will converge in Columbus, Ohio (USA) for the ESMO 2019. The program spans four days, featuring two days of outdoor field demonstrations and exhibits and a two-day technical program combined with an indoor exhibit area. Attendees will gain the knowledge and expertise required to effectively build, operate and maintain the world's power-delivery systems.

The event, from June 24-27 in Columbus, Ohio, is hosted by American Electric Power. The following is a Q&A with Rob Grawe, one of the presenters for the underground panel session.

Q: *Where were you born, and where did you get your education?*

A: I've lived in Columbus, Ohio my entire life. I graduated from Purdue University in 1996 and earned my MBA from Otterbein College in 2001.

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Q: Why did you or what you got you into this industry?

A: The desire to work for a major utility, especially the electric power industry. It works with AEP in my hometown.

Q: *Talk about the different positions*

you have had during your career and where you earned your teaching degree.

A: After obtaining my PE license, I started my career at a few civil engineering consulting firms in the central Ohio region. I accepted a position in 2005 as a civil engineer with the underground distribution network engineering organization. My responsibility included the rehabilitation and new construction of the underground network infrastructure across AEP's system. During the five years I was with the UG Network organization, I completed my technical degree in power engineering from Michigan Tech University (BSEE in 2009). During that time, I also obtained a teaching degree and began to teach technical courses, and course development, online through Bismarck State College in North Dakota.



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In 2010 I then accepted a new position running the crews who operated and maintained the underground network system in Columbus and Canton, Ohio, and Wheeling, West Virginia. I did this for two years before transferring to Transmission Line Engineering as a supervisor in 2012. I brought my underground expertise and leadership to the group. I'm currently the transmission line engineering manager for AEP's Ohio region.

Q: What is the most exciting thing about your job right now?

A: I have a great staff of engineering supervisors, engineers, designers, technicians, coordinators and GIS. I get to experience a lot of wide-ranging situations and challenges, all unique... We have a lot of work to do, given the recent industry growth in Transmission. I can say more about this...

Q: *What keeps you up at night?*

A: A storm, emergency outages and being able to get necessary support to restore power.

Q: *You are presenting at ESMO. What is the working title for your session?*

A: Underground

Q: *Who will the panelists be and what criteria are you using to choose them?*

A: The panel discussion will be a small part of the Underground Session. It will bring UG Distribution and UG Transmission experts together to discuss monitoring technology and differences between UG distribution and transmission systems. We have EPRI, PDC, AEP now, and still working to get more.

Q: *Why is this topic so crucial to the industry?*

A: It's underground, the other option to overhead design. Also, more people are asking more questions regarding burying power lines.

Q: *What will be different or special about this session?*

A: It brings distribution and transmission together to talk about differences and similarities between the two different types of cable systems. Also, we will work together and collaborate on monitoring efforts to help ensure the safety aspects of operating and maintaining underground systems.



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Q: *Why should people attend ESMO and your session? Who would benefit?*

A: Anyone involved with the design, operation and maintenance of underground cable systems.

Q: *What can the attendees expect to hear during your session at ESMO?*

Q: What can the attendees expect to hear during your session at ESMO?

A: Staying safe is the number one goal, and staying safe around operating and maintaining underground power systems, both distribution and transmission, is essential. At my session, utility professionals will learn how to find out the latest information on safety through monitoring efforts of underground power systems.

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SAFETY AND TRAINING

Training Spotlight: Terri Rehkop of SOS Intl

Terri Rehkop is the director of training development for SOS Intl.

Jul 29, 2019



The training industry is continuously changing, says Terri Rehkop, director of training development for SOS Intl. In the following Q&A, she shares how she got involved in the industry and how she is helping to develop training to meet clients' needs.

Q: How does your current position help you in developing training –and how does your experience help you in this role?

A: As director of training development, my role is to provide support to our team of IDs and SMEs. I manage budgets and track costs, so they can focus on what they do best – develop effective, engaging training. I make sure they have the tools they need, then get out of the way.

We have a great team who focuses on both our bookshelf training and client-specific training.

My background is in marketing communications, so focusing on how to best communicate a message to an audience is what I do. I have been able to help the team craft content and scripts so we're clearly communicating the information students need to know.

Q: When and why did you decide to go into your particular career field?

A: I decided early – I was on the newspaper in high school and found the whole process fascinating. I was drawn more to the sales and marketing side, enjoying the strategy and challenge of communicating product and service benefits to prospective audiences. I majored in journalism in college, but followed the advertising track and worked at advertising agencies after graduation. Over time, I focused more and more on the communication side – what is the key piece of information someone needs to know? That strategy transfers well to training in we need to communicate key information to students to make sure they learn what we need to them to.

Q: What is the best thing about your job right now?

A: Working with such a diverse group of experts. We have training SMEs and industry SMEs and people who are a combination. The discussions and strategizing are amazing. We're working hard to update and enhance our online training while supporting our instructors and classroom training. It's a fun time to work in training because the technology advances are making many things possible and affordable that haven't been before. We are working on video development, virtual reality and simulation. Our future looks completely different than it did even 12 months ago.

Q: What courses and content have you developed in the past, and what's coming up?

A: Our team is constantly working on our bookshelf. We just launched several new courses including Math for System Operators, Contingency Analysis with Simulation and Transmission Application with Simulation. We've also launched the first simulator specifically for distribution to complement our Distribution Control Center training program.

Q: What's the most important thing you've learned in your past experience as an instructional designer that you want to communicate to trainers, students or participants?

A: Make sure you're communicating clearly. Use concise, simple language. Students shouldn't have to translate a long, complex sentence to figure out what they're supposed to learn. Make it easy for students to learn.

Q: *Why do you think your job as an instructional designer is important to the industry? How does it help the students and the utilities?*

A: I've come to appreciate the importance of helping the customer decide what they need to enhance or improve their training program for their learners. Often times, customers find themselves in search of solutions to challenges. I think as instructional designers, we're able to see the big picture of an organization's training program and help fill in the gaps to help learners improve their knowledge and skills, which, in turn, strengthens the outcomes of their training.

Q: *What do you like to do in your spare time—do you see that as a complete escape or an extension of your career?*

A: My first love is reading, which is both an escape and an extension. Through books, I experience different ways of communicating by reading different genres and authors. I can apply their methods and techniques to the language we use to communicate technical topics. I also enjoy cooking and hiking which are more true escapes.

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