

NWALL/SWALLT 2018 Conference Report

A joint conference of the Northwest Association for Language Learning Technologies (formerly NWALL, and as of the end-of-conference board meeting, now [NWALLT](#)) and the Southwest Association for Language Learning Technology ([SWALLT](#)) was held on April 20 and 21, 2018 in Seattle, Washington. The topic of the event was The Post-Lab Era and was attended by approximately 30 participants from various corners of the field, including instructors in K-12 and higher education, staff and directors of language labs, and instructional technologists.



The conference started with a tour of facilities at the University of Washington, including labs, libraries, and active learning classrooms. The next two days included a keynote speech by Mike Ledgerwood on 50 Years of Learning Languages with Technology, a workshop on faculty authoring with the tools H5P and ANVILL, a forum discussion on the role of language resource centers and instructional strategies in the post-lab era, and eleven insightful presentations. (View the conference website and program [here](#).)



There were multiple strands of discussion throughout the presentations. Several talks focused on using technology to enhance classroom materials and experiences, while others centered on delivering instruction in online settings. Another major theme in many of the talks was the changing demands on language resources centers and how we can continue to advocate for their necessity in a society in which nearly all students are tech savvy and carry their own devices.

Several speakers came to the consensus that although students may no longer come to such centers for computer access and video libraries as was done in the past, support for faculty and a physical space is still essential. However, one size does not fit all, so it crucial that faculty and staff continually assess their own needs and engage in strategic outreach in order to best meet the demands of instructors and learners alike. Marketing and branding may also play a major role: Rather than promoting a language “lab”, there may be a greater appeal to a language “center”, “forum”, or “studio” which does not only provide technical resources and support, but essentially serves as a place for communities of practice come together, collaborate, and explore the many possibilities that are available both within in our own local settings and in virtual environments.



NWALLT and SWALLT wish to thank all sponsors (including the Center for Global Studies at UW) and participants and we hope that you will be able to join us for a tentative conference in the Southwest Region in 2020.