

What just happened at Storage Field Day 5?

An open letter to all

I've been in a lucky position to be a delegate for Tech Field Day in the past ([Guess who's going to be at Virtualization Field Day 3?](#)), and I've been an advocate of the Tech Field Day series ([Why you need to be watching Tech Field Day](#)).

This week was the [Storage Field Day 5](#) event hosted by the Tech Field Day team with a great panel of delegates, and a strong field of presenters. There were some challenges during presentations on Day 2 which triggered a number of excited conversations online and in the room. Not all of them were viewed as constructive.

I like many of you, was watching intently from my screen as I was doing other work, but I jumped into the active conversation and started to see something happen that has caused some difficulty in the community.

This may not sound like much, but I wanted to help to extend the olive branch between everyone who may have felt that things didn't go well, because in the end, I think it wasn't as bad as many may have thought.

This is how I thought I could do that:

An Open Letter to EMC, the Tech Field Day team, and All Who Watched Online

I'm Canadian, so I will start by saying that I'm sorry. Something happened at Storage Field Day that became a perfect storm of challenges during the EMC presentation. In the grand scheme of everything, this was a blip on the radar, but it was also one that was noticed in a negative way.

I was at Virtualization Field Day 3 where we had some rather animated conversations on products and processes, but we were able to push past that and get to the fun of sharing the story of the technology that brought us all there.

At SFD5 the perfect storm happened from a number of different ingredients:

- Tech Field Day delegates are experts, and they like to dive deep into technology...immediately
- EMC is a storied company, with a broad portfolio of incredibly powerful and innovative technology. They enjoy telling that story as it is a deep part of how they lead into their product discussions
- Viewers of the event have grown to become very active in participating with the Twitter hashtag ([#SFD5 in this case](#))
- People are particularly passionate about storage
- Twitter and the 140 character space do not provide room for effectively conveying a message sometimes
- In the IT blogging community we love SaaS (Sarcasm-as-a-Service)
- Everyone hates (or should hate) FUD (See this: <http://www.yellow-bricks.com/2014/04/14/fud-it/>)

The format of Tech Field Day events is *typically* a short blurb on the high level organization and the marketing back story which brings us to the really cool technology that is about to be discussed. The question that is on many people's minds is what just happened with the EMC presentation? (all videos available in the Storage Field Day 5 YouTube

Playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLinuRwpnsHaenc_YzsotnnQcn3ldRd14A&feature=view_all)

Here is my humble (and wholly my) opinion on how it all went down:

EMC were passionately sharing their story that was meant to lead to the "why" of their product development in their flash and Software Defined Storage (SDS) product suites.

The delegates were listening for a long time to the story, and nicely poked at the panel that it would be good to jump ahead.

Twitter began to light up with comments echoing the feeling of the delegates that we wanted to get to the fun stuff which is the deep dive on what is going on under the covers with particular technologies.

Then things got a little weird.

Comments moved from comedy laced with sarcasm towards sarcasm laced with impatience. This happened from all sides, and it escalated quickly.

What we really needed was for someone to remind us that we could all be cool and move forward with some really great conversation:



It's Tech Field Day. Let's all be cool!

It wasn't unlike a kindergarten boy who tugs a little girl's ponytail because he wants to get her attention. He likes her, but didn't know how to say it. The audience, delegates, and viewers who may have silently said things to their monitor as they watched, all were secretly cheering the presenters to be all that they could be.

In the end, the EMC team pulled out some great content and the closing presentation was a clear win judging by the response from all, and the great interactivity that happened both in the room and online.

So, to all involved, please don't be offended by what happened. What we all need to take away from this is that we have an incredibly passionate community, with passionate vendors, and a well orchestrated event in the Tech Field Day series. This happened because we were all cheering you on inside, but the message may have been clouded, and some things may have been said which didn't come across with the original intent.

This wasn't a negative reflection on EMC. It wasn't a negative reflection on the delegates. It wasn't a negative reflection on the viewers. It just got a little heated, but we all came back to a common place in the end which was to celebrate the spirit of the event and all those who participated.

In closing I'll leave you with this because if nothing, we need to look back on the event and see that we are all passionate just like this classic sports fan. We all look at the event, the delegates, and

presenting vendors with hope that they can all shine and be their best for themselves, and for all of us. We all want you to succeed, because as technologists, bloggers, customers, vendors and viewers alike, we all win when innovative technology and stories are shared.

So I say: Tech Field Day - It's Still Real to Me Dammit!