



History of NASIG's Vision and Planning

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Midway through NASIG's third decade, three issues remain in the forefront of its existence: financial planning, membership development, and technology. All were concerns during the first two decades, and as the function of the organization has evolved, they have become more important. Strategic plans have been developed in 2000, 2003, and 2007, and periodically reviewed.

The biggest issue facing NASIG was the development of a financial plan. This comprehensive, long-range plan was adopted in 2005, preparing NASIG for two independent one-year financial crises: significant loss of income (such as the loss of 1/3 or more of membership dues) and significant loss of conference income. No longer could NASIG expect to fund a year's operation on the surplus of conference revenues. There was no emergency fund, no contingency fund, no endowments. The single budget was re-categorized into four budgets, General operating budget, General operating reserve budget, Conference budget, and Conference Reserve budget. Also, the financial management rested primarily with the President and the Treasurer; it was time to make the entire Board responsible for the financial management of the organization. The first step towards the implementation of the plan was the membership approval of the tripling of annual dues from \$25 to \$75. After this approval, the Executive Board was unanimous in their adoption and implementation of the plan.

The 2005 financial plan provided not only financial guidance, but also required structural changes in the Executive Board. The Finance Committee became the Financial Development Committee, charged with fundraising activities. One of the biggest issues has involved organizational sponsorship. NASIG was founded on the concept of equal representation, with no commercial bias. The financial situation of the country and its effect on conference expenses has caused the Board to re-examine the issue, and to determine how we can walk the line between commercial support and lack of bias. After a long period of discussion of pros and cons, the 2008 conference became the test platform to solicit organizational sponsorship at differing levels, helping to keep conference rates reasonable for attendees; \$11,000 was raised, and allowed us to show a \$4,000 profit on the conference. In 2009, \$43,200 was received; without this sponsorship, the Asheville conference would have been nearly \$9,000 in the red. The 2010 conference will be the first to have vendor exhibits, although on a limited basis.

The original plan called for the conclusion of the financial plan during the January 2010 Board meeting, when it would be reviewed, modified and continued, or eliminated, and a new financial plan created. The original goals, while enthusiastic, proved to be less than realistic. In October, 2009, the Financial Development Committee submitted a new plan for the Board's approval, openly stating the need for outside funding.

It is our intention to capture more sponsorship and support without commercializing NASIG. But at the same time, it all has to start from within --NASIG needs to embrace an environment/climate of support for vendors/sponsors. Sponsors are reluctant to come if they are not welcome. And it is almost impossible to create these opportunities without some commercial elements becoming present within NASIG.

- Draft, NASIG Financial Development Plan, 2009

Another structural change involved the Membership Committee, as it became the Membership Development Committee (MDC), charged with increasing numbers of members, particularly from Canada, Mexico, and the commercial sector. While NASIG has members around the world, the participation of the two other North American countries, Mexico and Canada, has been low. In 2005, the Board established the Translators' Resource Team as part

of the Membership Development Committee, to translate membership forms and the 2003 Strategic Plan into French and Spanish, in hopes of gaining members from these countries. This team was dissolved in 2007, but will be called on as translating needs arise.

Also formed was the Library School Outreach Task Force with three purposes: recruitment of new members, partner with schools on offering programs, and publicize the student grant awards. This further developed into the Library School Ambassador program, made up of one member each of Assessment & Evaluation Committee, Continuing Education Committee, and the Membership Development Committee. Recruitment for additional ambassadors is through announcements in the Newsletter and personal contacts at the annual conference.

Again, the Board recognized the need for additional support. There had not been a category for Institutional membership, since this is an organization of individuals on a level playing field. This also may have led to the decline in the participation of the commercial sector. The issue of membership development became the topic for the 2005 brainstorming session. The 2005 conference had a vendor demo, and there was standing room only; it was a great learning opportunity of sharing information, not selling. The Membership Development Committee's goal was to create a plan for membership targeting levels in different segments of the serials community. In December, 2007, the MDC recommended that an institutional membership category be established, to strengthen NASIG's position as a force in the serials information community. After considerable discussion, this was put to the membership as a by-laws change in 2010, and received a 90% approval.

However, membership development has extended beyond bringing in new members. Networking at the annual conference has always been one of NASIG's greatest strengths. Increased opportunities for networking throughout the year through the Newsletter and discussion lists became a priority in 2007, and an objective in the 2007 Strategic Plan update (2008). A lack of willing candidates for Vice President/President Elect resulted in a lively discussion at the 2007 Louisville conference. One concern expressed was the amount of work involved in this position, as well as the President's position. The Administrative Support Task Force became part of the strategic planning in 2008, with the intention of hiring a half-time individual to provide clerical help, in place by January, 2009. Four duties were identified as most critical:

- Serving as point of contact for the organization
- Support for the board and committees regarding the technology vendor
- Performing clerical work as needed for board and committees, including conference registration activities
- Meeting planning; working with CPC and PPC as needed

In 2009, however, the task force was disbanded and the search process for administrative support not initiated due to the current economic climate. Two positions were created until NASIG finances could support paid staff. It was decided to appoint a conference coordinator consultant position, locating sites and working to contain costs; Joyce Tenney accepted this two-year position. Buddy Pennington became the technology liaison to ArcStone Information Services, to streamline communications and decision points.

Technology is the third planning issue to be addressed. By 2005, NASIG's techies had produced the NASIG newsletter in digital form only, enhancements had been made to the membership database, online volunteer forms were created, and online registration was under development. It became apparent that we needed an examination of our uses of technology, and a plan for the future, much as the financial plan was intended to do. Step Schmidt was appointed to an ad hoc position of Chief Technology Officer, to study the issues related to NASIG's technical requirements. Her study provided a starting point, but it was obvious the position was too large for a volunteer, and outsourcing of tasks was necessary. The Board's reservation concerned funding the outsourcing, and appointed the Technology Outsourcing Task Force to identify what should be outsourced. Three areas were regarded as critical: online voting, membership database development, and online conference and event registration.

While this task force was beginning its work, technology moved forward in NASIG. The blog format of the Newsletter and online evaluations became a reality in 2006. Online-only renewals appeared in 2007.

NASIG-L was becoming limited in meeting the needs of NASIG, and a new system was planned for implementation in late 2007. After only one year of work on a technology RFP, a new technology contract was signed in October, 2007 with ArcStone Information Services. Donnice Cochenour became project manager for the implementation; the membership database was soon in the migration process. A special budget line was created to reflect the costs of the technology expenditures. Online voting became a fact in 2008. The new website preview was revealed to the membership in March, 2008. On June 24, 2008, NASIG-L was retired.

By September, 2008, the Board was already discussing convening a task force to start the process of developing an RFP for the next technology provider. Two months later, the decision was made to delay the new RFP. In June, 2009, issues with the current contract and the lack of resolution with ArcStone brought the discussion to the forefront again, and the need for revision to the contract was addressed.

The Executive Board has conducted two-three conference calls per year, between actual meetings. A Task Force was appointed to review conference calling options in 2009. After testing products, it was decided in 2010 to stay with the current product.

Open access of the Proceedings has become an issue; is it time to move beyond Haworth as our publisher? The appointment of the Open Access Task Force in late 2009 is allowing for the examination of this question; resolution will come during the next anniversary report.

The past five years have given NASIG, as an organization, the opportunity to focus on what it needs to become in this rapidly changing environment. The 2003 Strategic Plan calls NASIG "the preeminent organization for the North American serials community, and it assumes a leadership role in the global information environment." To this end, NASIG must establish positions on key serials-related issues . . . [and] take on a role as a serials advocacy group (Strategic Direction 4). The question of how to take a stand existed because there was no precedent on how to take a stand. "Hot topics" discussions were found to be one outlet for advocacy. Additionally, networking relationships with the Society for Scholarly Publishing, NISO, and the Association for Subscription Agents and Intermediaries have been pursued, to take advantage of webinars and meetings at members' rates.

Mary Page, NASIG President 2005/06, concluded her President's column in December, 2005 by writing, "NASIG was founded with the idea of bringing all parts of the industry together to wrestle with the challenges we shared . . . The only constant we can count on is change." And Rick Anderson, NASIG President 2009/10, wrote in his September 2009 column,

As I look forward eagerly to celebrating our 25th anniversary in Palm Springs, it seems to me that this is a humbling time to be president - a time for looking back at the amazing things done by my predecessors and by the NASIG membership in general, and for looking ahead at both the myriad opportunities and serious challenges that we face. I can hardly imagine a more exciting time to be involved with NASIG.

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