



North American Serials Interest Group Strategic Planning Retreat

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Hilton Pointe Tapatio Cliffs
Phoenix, Arizona


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Background

Association Solutions, LLC (ASL) was retained by the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) to facilitate a day-long retreat involving the current Board of Directors. ASL facilitated NASIG's last strategic plan session in January 2003.

The goal of this retreat was to develop a new plan that would focus on a three to five year time frame with emphasis on creating action plans to guide the next 18 months.

Prior to this retreat, a brief questionnaire was distributed to help participants get ready for the planning process. A summary of responses was distributed during the meeting.

The agenda for the retreat was to:

- Review accomplishments from current plan
- Review current strategic directions/revise?
- Craft short-term goals/objectives
- Craft action plans for 2007-2008

A summary of the plan can be found at the end of this report.

Review Accomplishments

As a precursor to working on goals and objectives, some time was spent reviewing the summary of the pre-retreat questionnaire exploring the environment in which NASIG operates, and reviewing accomplishments since the last planning meeting.

Trends in the industry or field

- Constant, accelerating change
- An environment of scarcity is moving toward a glut of information
- Aging of profession
- Digitalization – moving from “buying” to “renting”
- Moving from a single “player” to more collaboration (collaboration is a necessity because of limited money)
- Scarce financial resources
- More accountability
- Mergers and acquisitions (publishers & vendors)
- A growing gap between older and younger members, cultural gap
- People use libraries differently
- Upper management (deans, etc.) don't understand the libraries of today
- Technology is driving change
- Budgets for educational resources are down
- Middle and upper managers are stretched thin, many are retiring
- No training ground for new managers
- We offer a lot more content now (as opposed to just journal subscriptions)

- Librarians are perceived as not being nimble enough
- Librarians tend to wait until they “get it right” –
- Cultural issues regarding who is attracted to the field
- New models of content provision; the format description is not as important
- Starting to look at the allocation of staff resources – putting staffing resources in the right place

Strengths

- Mentoring
- Annual conference
- High quality of conference programming
- Managing money – raised dues
- Approachable
- Network opportunities at conference
- Passion for NASIG
- Strong core base of members

Areas Needing Development

- Using organizational technology
- Need to attract more “non-library” registrants to conference
- Perceptions among publishers/vendors that NASIG is not welcoming (open hostility sometimes seen)
- Some members perceive cliques – the strong core of base membership can appear cliquish
- Broaden community – if this is a library community, NASIG is redundant
- Need more infrastructure
- Need more continuity and history (e.g., conference site experience)

Opportunities

- Be part of a movement to move beyond the library (e.g., Microsoft, Google, iPhone, iPod)
- May be better positioned to respond because NASIG is not a library organization
- Move away from serials in their traditional mode – start looking at other serialized entities
- Focus on content rather than the subscription
- NASIG’s historic emphasis on community
- Have a strong core of 900 members (who renewed despite the tripling of dues)
- Define NASIG beyond the conference

Accomplishments

- Bylaws change regarding treasurer in training
- Greater financial security
 - Dues increase
 - Open discussion about dues increase
 - Created financial plan
 - Online renewal offered
- Conference is more professional
 - Using hotel instead of campus
- Diverse communication

- Blog started
- Have experimented with using different technologies for conference
- Diverse non-librarian participation
 - Conference presentations have been well received
 - Redesign of conference program continues
- Increased financial awards to students (while still making a profit on conference)
- New committees are working (Membership development, outreach)

Learnings

- Change is difficult and painful
- Hard to break “we’ve always done it like this” mode
- Consensus doesn’t always lead to a good decision
- It can be hard to understand exactly what NASIG is about
- Managing change is tough given, virtual nature, turnover in board positions, volunteer nature
- Takes a long time to get to financial security
- Sometimes it is hard to stop doing valuable things
- Victim of our own success – conference growth is leading to having to use more expensive venues
- 20-60-20 rule (20% support you always, 60% on fence but generally supportive, 20% never happy) – work to “move the middle”
- Need to find ways to be more responsive, more pro-active (e.g., with the larger information society around us)
- Would be nice to find a way to measure how much risk we can absorb in moving toward hard objective

Strategic Directions

The group reviewed the existing strategic directions; some group comments were recorded about each direction:

1. Stimulate diverse communication channels
 - This is about developing communication methods within the organization and outside the organization
 - Key because of dispersed membership and because not many face-to-face opportunities
 - Could be interpreted as referencing diversity of members rather than diversity of communication methods
 - Needs clarity and specificity
2. Attract and strengthen involvement of diverse and broad-based constituencies in NASIG.
 - Is clear
 - It is what makes NASIG different from other organizations
 - Still important
 - Would like it to refer to current and potential/prospective constituencies
 - Flipping the phrase may help

3. Re-invent programming in all areas
 - What does “programming” mean?
 - Conference
 - Continuing education
 - Regional meetings
 - Is very open-ended
 - Wording needs to be tweaked
 - Change word “re-invent”

4. Implement a dynamic public relations program.
 - Seems to be more of a “means” than an “end”
 - Too specific to be a strategic direction

5. Define options for using technology and employing support necessary to avoid volunteer burnout.
 - How do we avoid volunteer burnout?
 - Leadership development
 - Using technology effectively
 - Making better us of volunteers
 - Relates to long-term viability
 - Includes concept of “capacity building”

6. Generate funding to support the vision of the organization and remain fiscally sound.
 - Concept is OK as is
 - May get minimal editing

Generally, everyone agreed that most needed editing for clarity and emphasis but the concept of each was still appropriate. The exception related to the strategic direction regarding public relations. It was agreed that was more of a “means” rather than an “end – and so, it was dropped.

After breaking into small groups, the strategic directions were edited and short-term goals were drafted to help define work that will move NASIG in that direction. The large reacted to the work of the small groups; goals were refined further and action plans were started.

The following charts do not reflect the intermediate steps in this process, but rather, capture the final work of each small group.

Strategic Directions/Goals/Objectives and/or Actions

Strategic Direction: Attract and strengthen involvement in NASIG of all members of the serials information community
Goal: To expand membership categories
Objectives/Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create institutional membership

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore other membership categories
Goal: To show members that it is easy to get involved
Objectives/Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish articles and statistics illustrating volunteer process • Make mentorship a yearlong commitment specifically involving encouragement to join committee, etc.
Team: Rick, Kathryn, Kim

Strategic Direction: Create and offer a broad array of educational and professional development opportunities
Goal: To determine member needs for professional development and utilize appropriate delivery options for programs
Objectives/Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To survey NASIG members • To review the last 3 years of conference programming evaluations • To review information gathered and compare with existing opportunities elsewhere and develop recommendations for implementation
Team: Joyce, Erika, Cory

Strategic Direction: Stimulate conversation among the serials information community
Goal: To increase the level of communication among our constituent types
Objectives/Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand 3 existing venues for members' networking opportunities by June 2009 • Educate members on how to use existing social tools • Educate members that NASIG is more than a library organization
Goal: To enhance external communication with related professional communities
Objectives/Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a brochure aimed at vendors/publishers to explain NASIG by June 2008
Team: Sarah, Char, Alison

Strategic Direction: Develop future funding to support the vision of the organization and remain fiscally sound
Goal: To increase investment revenue (with investment policies) and develop new revenue streams
Objectives/Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a financial advisory committee • In consultation with a financial advisor, make recommendations to the board regarding financial development and policies
Goal: To realize and publicize conference attendee benefits from conference revenue
Objectives/Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and implement a plan for utilization of a percentage of conference revenue to underwrite attendee benefits
Team: Peter, Jeff, Jill

Strategic Direction: Improve tools and processes to assure the effectiveness of NASIG at all levels of the organization
Goal: To implement appropriate technologies to improve NASIG's effectiveness
Objectives/Actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negotiate terms and sign contract 2. Migrate membership database to new platform 3. Create conference website and registration pages/forms 4a. Inventory and archive old website, as needed 4b. Migrate remaining data to new platform 5. Test voting functions in preparation for 2008 elections 6. Identify how committee communication needs will be met
Goal: to provide long term administrative continuity to allow the Executive Board to focus on leadership and management issues
Objectives/Actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create task force 2. Create job descriptions 3. Investigate options and analyze costs 4. Make recommendations to Executive Board
Team: Anna, Denise, Bob

Action Planning

As a final step, the group developed a timeline of action steps. This timeline will likely need some additional review and editing.

Objective / Action	1st Quarter Oct-Dec 07	2nd Quarter Jan-Mar 08	3rd Quarter Apr-Jun 08	4th Quarter Jul-Sep 08
Expand 3 existing venues for member networking opportunities	Use president's column to kick off networking opportunities [Char]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted emails to publishers & vendors inviting them to conference [publicist] 2. Create "Ask a ____" forum [ECC] 3. Create training for how to use forums [ECC] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Identify facilitators for the forum [Board] 5. Introduce "Ask a ____" forum in live format [facilitators, at conference] 6. Introduce "Ask a ____" [newsletter] 	Additional newsletter articles from vendors, publishers [newsletter editor] □
Create financial advisory committee	Get board approval for committee formation	VP (Jill) submit newsletter and call for volunteers	Appointment of committee members (to be composed of treasurer plus 4 other members)	Committee meets at the NASIG 2008 conference and begins work on financial planning
Implement tech RFP [new platform deadline is 1/1/08]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appointed members from Executive Board negotiate and sign contract by 10/31/07 2. D&D will migrate membership data base within two weeks after platform is available 3. CPC has skeleton conference website up by 12/15/07 4. ECC in consultation w/Exec. Board and Ctte's will inventory website, done by 10/31/07 5. ECC will migrate remaining data within two months of platform availability 6. N&E & others will test voting functions within 2 weeks of platform availability 		ECC will complete migration of listservs & similar functions to a new platform by 6/30/08	ECC will survey cttes and task forces on communication needs by 9/08
Make recommendation for Executive Board administrative support		Create administrative support task force by end of Mar 08 [Executive Board]	In consultation w/Executive Board, task force creates job description by end of Jun 08	Task force investigates options & analyzes costs. Presents recommendation to Executive Board

Objective / Action	1st Quarter Oct-Dec 07	2nd Quarter Jan-Mar 08	3rd Quarter Apr-Jun 08	4th Quarter Jul-Sep 08
Create institutional membership	Determine needed changes in bylaws [Bylaws committee]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare the membership [Executive Board] 2. Define terms (costs, rights, etc.) of inst. Membership [MDC, with input from Executive Board] 3. Bylaws changes are placed on ballot for Spring 2008 [MDC] 		
Create a year-long mentoring program	Develop a year-long mentoring plan [mentoring group]	Publicize new program [mentoring group]		
Determine member needs for professional development / use appropriate delivery options for programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review conference evaluations / identify requested topics 2. Review 3 years of conference evaluations to identify trends & topics of interest 3. Review evaluations to consider topics/programs w/high attendance [E&A for all]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop survey(s) [CEC] 2. Test survey questions [CEC & others as needed] 3. Administer survey [CEC via SurveyMonkey] 4. Compile survey results [CEC] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review existing NASIG capabilities for delivery & future capabilities [CEC?] 2. Monitor other existing options (external to NASIG infrastructure) [CEC] 3. Report on best practices for delivery [CEC] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review information gathered in earlier steps & compare with existing opportunities elsewhere 2. Develop recommendations for implementation
Publicize volunteer program	Guest editorial & stat report in newsletter [Erika/Char/Jill]	Add "volunteer wish list" to newsletter [vp/p-elect]	Follow-up report at June 08 board meeting [pres]	

Final Notes

How will we keep the plan alive?

- Update the calendar
- Create an 18-month timeline
- Action items
 - Discuss items before going to the committees
 - Communicate to committees
- Put plan items on board agendas

Parking Lot

The comments are thoughts and ideas that arose during the day, outside of the agenda, and that were recorded in the “parking lot” without any conversation during the day.

- NASIG University
- An award/scholarship for new members to the vendor/publisher community
- Internships – offer them to publishers, vendors, libraries from members
- Can NASIG work through/with consortia groups?
- Reduced rates for paraprofessionals
- If site is known, CPC for 2009 should start on website in summer 2008 or earlier. Continue this in the future.

Participants

Rick Anderson
Anna Creech
Char Simser
Jill Emery
Kim Maxwell
Denise Novak
Erika Ripley
Alison Roth
Bob Schatz
Jeff Slagell
Joyce Tenney
Cory Tucker
Kathryn Wesley
Sarah George Wessel
Peter Whiting

Plan Summary

Mission

NASIG is an independent organization that promotes communication, understanding, and sharing of ideas among all members of the serials information community.

Vision

- The North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) is a network of informed, active individuals that promotes dialogue and professional growth. NASIG is a forum for genuine communication, fostering a unity of purpose.
- NASIG offers the most influential and dynamic annual conference where issues are intensely debated and speakers challenge assumptions and traditions, and provides other opportunities to address specific needs and skills.
- NASIG is an advocate, seeking options, suggesting solutions, and providing support for and involvement in industry standards, issues, and projects appropriate to and beneficial for all of its constituents.
- NASIG is the preeminent organization for the North American serials community, recognizing and asserting its place in the global information environment.
- NASIG remains a fiscally responsible, financially secure, and well-managed organization.

Strategic Directions

- Attract and strengthen involvement in NASIG of all members of the serials information community
- Create and offer a broad array of educational and professional development opportunities
- Stimulate conversation among the serials information community
- Develop future funding to support the vision of the organization and remain fiscally sound
- Improve tools and processes to assure the effectiveness of NASIG at all levels of the organization