

perhaps a larger size to call out the renewal vs. early bird would be helpful. Henri pointed out the issue that he went for the early bird renewal but didn't renew after. Another attendee commented that since the Board is represented by more of an American base, there is a lower likelihood of having an automatic renewal system due to regional payment laws.

An attendee raised the question about options to have monthly *TUGboat* online electronically to save printing costs, and whether that actually provided savings. A suggestion was to have a trial membership that could be electronic membership only, hence a person would need a full membership in order to receive more benefits. In relation to this conversation, Alan Wetmore questioned how many beginners would be after *TUGboat*.

There was discussion that the physical copy of the *TUGboat* itself goes beyond just the user group; it is one of the few places where people can do research level publication in document processing. Frank Mittelbach noted that it is a library resource and pointed out that the ACM digital library has no physical form, which has been detrimental to it.

Frank also noted that we are not getting (as user group members) the “great unwashed” that Jim Hefferon alluded to in his talk.

It was reported that TUG membership is declining but  $\text{\TeX}$  usership is not necessarily doing the same. Frank pointed out that people are getting information for free as opposed to getting benefits from community membership, and consequently proposed that institutional members should pay more to help cover the costs of the individual users and developers. This led to a following discussion that the membership needs to provide an advantage to its members. William expressed a desire to see the feasibility of a donation method. Attendees agreed that the method should not be the banner approach of sites such as Wikipedia, but should serve a similar purpose.

It was reported that 8000 people are using the  $\text{\LaTeX}$  project website, of which a large proportion are actually newcomers.

This raised the question of reliance on donations from corporate/institutional users, and if that is the case, what methods should be used to increase donations. An attendee suggested it would be difficult and would rely on collaboration with sites such as StackExchange and Overleaf.

Discussion ensued that the community is moving into more of a cloud-based environment, but that is not a particular goal of the user group. From the user group perspective, developers feel like they are producing the front end of something that is being used in commercial ways (e.g., Overleaf, etc.).

## TUG 2019 Annual General Meeting notes

Notes recorded by Jennifer Claudio

The TUG Annual General Meeting took place during the TUG 2019 conference in Palo Alto, California, on 10 August 2019. The meeting was conducted by the TUG president, Boris Veytsman.

Boris opened the discussion by reporting the financial state of TUG and posing a question about what we can do to improve it.

An attendee asked the question regarding renewals issue, mentioning that DANTE has an automatic renewal system that TUG does not have, and

The question was raised as to whether TUG would be able to buy an advertisement on StackExchange. A response was that it could be considered since a community ad currently exists in a sidebar. Another person asked if it would be possible to have a hotlink pointing to a donation page.

Chris Jimenez, as a new person, expressed that he realized that the user group is an important component. He noted that he sees the efforts of the developers and that L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X has more visibility. He noted, however, that there is not a lot of incentive to join the group itself. People tend to gravitate toward the easiest or most convenient solutions, rather than seeking the group. He is a Word user who has found he needs more than what Word and InDesign offer, hence is new to T<sub>E</sub>X.

Jim Hefferon asked a marketing question: Is it possible on StackExchange to have a flare that says “I’m a DANTE member” or “I’m a TUG member” to show where the cohort giving answers is coming from, in order to help make the user groups known.

Federico Garcia-DeCastro expressed that he has a love and hobby for T<sub>E</sub>X, which is not what would make him pay for membership, but after attending the meeting, he feels connected. The T<sub>E</sub>X Live DVD or such isn’t what makes him want to join the group.

Cheryl Ponchin asked if the group thought it would be possible for representatives at universities, and possibly at high schools, to post print media to entice users to join the user group. A high school or undergraduate initiative could include a poster competition or hosting a high school poster session.

Federico pointed out that this kind of marketing brings potentially T<sub>E</sub>X and L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X users, but does not bring in members to the user group.

Chris Rowley mentioned we have plenty of links with people, including founders.

Discussion returned to how many library memberships exist, since those would confer a huge potential for using *TUGboat* for library subscriptions to draw in funding. Robin clarified that subscriptions must be kept separate from membership subscriptions in order to engage university faculty. The question was raised as to whether marketing campaigns should be directed to librarians.

Robin suggested that perhaps TUG needs to redefine the T<sub>E</sub>X Users Group. She said that TUG cannot compete with Overleaf and its 4.5 million users or other commercial enterprises. She said that years ago a newbie attending a TUG conference relayed in his talk the highly unusual fact that when users write to (L<sup>A</sup>)T<sub>E</sub>X-related support lists they are essentially getting answers from the top: developers, professionals, the elite, the people who wrote the

code. Robin suggested that TUG should perhaps stop wasting its time on nickel and dime issues, and focus on old and new contributors and developers who keep the language of T<sub>E</sub>X alive, relevant and flourishing. Some form of T<sub>E</sub>X is used by Overleaf, Adobe, Wikipedia, MathType, and many others, and perhaps there could be dialogue (as Boris talked about) between TUG and commercial enterprises to offer grant money or a bonus or some form of advertising, credits, something! to acknowledge the work of the T<sub>E</sub>X community. She emphasized that the large commercial enterprises should somehow support and reciprocate the generosity of the developers of the T<sub>E</sub>X Live software and related products (such as the accessibility effort). She suggested TUG help find additional funding for major projects that developers could apply for. The core membership and donations continues to support the office, overhead and committed funds such as the bursary and smaller T<sub>E</sub>X development projects, but perhaps larger grants, other funding sources, could be found for development projects with the help of seed money from commercial sources. This could include a slice for TUG, thus a well-deserved infusion of capital for conferences, bursary, etc.

Didier Verna mentioned his experience with the LISP community: back in the days there was the Association of Lisp Users because it was a young language and people with common interests needed federation, but as soon as it was standardized, the organization essentially vanished because the tool was standardized to a high degree and people were using it broadly. The end user had no incentive to join a user group because all resources had become available.

There was a suggestion that maybe the reality of the technical fields is that there is a saturation point where people know about and/or use T<sub>E</sub>X. Emails are not coming from the tech fields, but rather from the humanities.

Another question that was raised was whether PDF usage decreased relative to the use of webpages that have built-in PDF readers?

Adobe: licensing fees do not fly with most companies because they feel like they are held hostage. A better approach would be the idea of consultation and fees that could come back to TUG. It would save time for a company such as Adobe if they were able to get fast feedback or support from TUG.

Didier suggested having a fundraiser, but Boris pointed out that we don’t have extra money to make a fundraiser happen. Seeking grants, as mentioned above, was one option that was raised.  $\diamond$