

IEEE SECTIONS CONGRESS 2008

Celebrating Volunteer Achievements Worldwide



IEEE SECTIONS CONGRESS 2008 RECOMMENDATIONS

FINAL REPORT

IEEE Sections Congress 2008 Recommendations and Report

Since 1984, representatives from each IEEE Section throughout the world have been invited to participate in IEEE Sections Congress (SC). Sections Congress is part of the Member and Geographic Activities (MGA) Strategy to implement the MGA Vision, Mission, and Goals, for the purpose of fulfilling the mission of IEEE.

It is the opportunity for IEEE representatives from all over the world to participate in an event which provides them with the tools and training to assist their unit in focusing their activities solely on the member and increase members' participation in IEEE activities. This event:

- Provides geographic unit leadership with the opportunity to network - sharing information, increasing collaboration between Sections, Societies, and other IEEE organizational units - during and after Congress;
- Provides as many opportunities as possible for geographic unit leaders to become more familiar with the many resources available and the ways to use them, to maximize their volunteer leadership efforts;
- Offers a forum at which Section Chairs and other leaders are able to voice their opinions and concerns, generating recommendations, which guide policy making and resource usage over the ensuing three years.

In September 2008, IEEE Sections Congress was held in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, and attended by 1,072 individuals. Each Region submitted recommendations that were reviewed and discussed during the weekend. The issues were grouped into the following categories:

- a. Business/Financial Operations
- b. Information Technology Operations
- c. Operations
- d. Member Benefits
- e. Membership
- f. Member Growth and Development
- g. Public Awareness and New Technology
- h. Recruitment/Retention (Membership)

At the closing ceremony on Monday morning, the primary Section delegates prioritized 21 recommendations. The top ten recommendations were presented to the IEEE Board of Directors and forwarded to the MGA Board for action.

Since September 2008, the MGA Board has been reviewing the progress of each of the recommendations. Additionally, progress reports have been distributed throughout IEEE and available on the SC web page (<http://www.ieee.org/sc2008>). This final report represents the efforts of many volunteers and staff who were assigned a recommendation.

Enhancements to IEEE membership benefits have been made using guidance from IEEE Sections Congress 2008. In August 2011, primary delegates will be asked to determine a new set of recommendations, to guide policy making and resource usage for the next three years.

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Progress reports from May 2009, November 2009, and June 2010 are available on the IEEE Sections Congress 2008 (SC08) Web page (<http://www.ieee.org/sc2008>).

1. Every member to have an annual entitlement to a limited number of free IEEE Xplore downloads.

Category: Member Benefits

IEEE eBook Classics were launched in April 2010. IEEE members now have access to more than 240 eBooks from the IEEE Press collection through IEEE Xplore. The eBook collection spans a number of today's technologies across 15 different content areas. This collection of eBooks is offered to members at no additional cost. Newer eBooks will be added every year.

Members of the MGA Board and the Technical Activities Board conducted a detailed analysis of this proposal. This analysis determined that implementation of this recommendation would result with a revenue loss of US\$1.4M to \$4.0M to IEEE. Based on this assessment, it was concluded that IEEE will not be able to act upon this recommendation due to the projected negative impacts on revenue to IEEE.

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2. Payment Flexibility - Members, especially students and those in developing countries who do not have credit cards, need flexible payment methods

- **regardless of location and banking methods;**
- **supporting aggregated payments in local currency;**
- **minimizing transaction costs and processing overheads.**

Category: Business/Financial Operations

Students in India were the group selected to implement this feature as access to payment options in US currency is difficult and costly to acquire. It was also felt that not having a local currency option was a barrier to students becoming members. To work within the financial and legal structure in India, an implementation model was developed by contracting with a local association management company (MCI Management, Pvt. Ltd., located in Gurgaon, India) to collect payments in rupees for applications and renewals for students in India. A pilot program for selected student branches was initiated in January 2010 to certify the payment process and confirm the capability of the vendor. The program was put into full operation in October 2010 for the 2011 renewal cycle. Results from the full renewal cycle will be prepared and presented to the MGA Board in June 2011. No other countries have expressed a need for this option.

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3. Provide "Leadership Training Handbook (Text and Multimedia) for Section Officers," to include:

- **Volunteer Recruitment;**
- **Roles and Responsibilities of Section Chair and Section Committee;**
- **Presiding at Meetings;**
- **Documentation - Websites and Forms;**
- **Time Table for Elections and Other Formal IEEE Required Activities;**
- **Transfer of Responsibilities to Incoming Officers.**

Category - Member Growth and Development

This recommendation has been implemented. The IEEE Center for Leadership Excellence (CLE) (<http://www.ieee.org/go/cle>) was established in 2009. The MGA Board has also created an organizational structure to support it by establishing an MGA Committee which is responsible for training activities. The CLE addresses the training needs for volunteers (and members) to perform their roles and acquire skills that will help them in their professional career and in their IEEE leadership positions. In addition, it will provide the one source for all volunteer training needs, and, when fully implemented, the framework for all volunteers to identify training options for the area of development needed.

QuickStart Training modules for the Section Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chapter Chair were moved to the IEEE e-learning library/IEEE Online Education Portal in 2010. New content is continually being added, and all training material presented at SC2011 will be accessible via the IEEE CLE portal.

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4. The MGA Board to assign staff to develop a user-friendly system and support to enable sections, chapters and affinity groups to deliver, at low cost, teleconferencing, collaborative technologies, and webinars, as a free member benefit.

Category - IT Operations

This recommendation has been completed. MGA provides a Web Conferencing service to geographic organizational units for online meetings, webinars, trainings, demos, and presentations. The service is also available to MGA Board members and MGA Board Committees, as well as Region and Section Executive Committee officers. To access this and other volunteer tools, visit <http://vtools.ieee.org>

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Web Conferencing tool service usage statistics (as of 13 April 2011)

Number of meetings	314
Average meeting duration (minutes)	81
Total number of attendees	1354
Average number of meeting attendees	4
Maximum number of attendees	48
Desktop sharing (count/duration)	242/5607
Document sharing (count/duration)	257/6107
White Board (count/duration)	72/733
Chat (count)	4222
Total number of scheduled meetings	63
Total number of Ad-Hoc meetings	251

Additionally, IEEE offers online communities (<http://oc.ieee.org>). In 2010, the online communities were upgraded to a new platform, and are now hosted on an IEEE branded version of Sixent Enterprise offered by the Ramius Corporation. This IEEE branded version of the Sixent Enterprise is a Web 2.0 social networking solution, which brings social networking and the principles of enterprise professional networking together. It provides new features, better scalability for the growing number of communities, and modern design, while significantly lowering licensing costs.

Online Communities statistics (as of 13 April 2011)

Number of active communities	150 including communities for Regions, Sections, Conferences, and more
Number of communities members	9954

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- 5. For digital libraries: develop additional, smaller tiered packages (10, 20 items, etc.) which allow members to purchase defined quantities of digital content without expiration. Provide members permanent electronic access to previously purchased content.**

Category - Member Growth and Development

This recommendation has been completed. Launched in September 2010, Member Digital Library Basic allows members lower cost access to IEEE content (US\$15 per month for three articles per month; unused articles roll over through the end of 12 months, for a total of 36 articles per year). Any articles members download can be stored for future use, provided they maintain their subscription. Although this project is complete, MGA will continue to work with IEEE Publications to assess the product to ensure that it continues to add value to IEEE membership. IEEE members are eligible for a free 30 day trial to Member Digital Library, and first year renewing higher grade members are offered a three

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month free trial to Member Digital Library Basic. More information is available at http://www.ieee.org/publications_standards/publications/subscriptions/prod/mdl/mdl_overview.html

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6. Improve the implementation of recommendations identified at Sections Congress.

Category - Operations

This recommendation has been completed. The MGA Board took a proactive approach in reviewing and revising the recommendation reporting process. The MGA Board made all of the recommendations a priority by incorporating each recommendation into the MGA project list. A specific MGA Board member and MGA staff member were assigned to each recommendation. Progress on recommendations has been reported via various sources:

- to SC08 attendees and current Section Chairs on a regular basis via email and the SCOOP newsletter;
- in an article in the January 2010 issue of "The Institute";
- at MGA Operations Committee and MGA Board meetings;
- on the SC08 Web page.

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7. There are a good number of IEEE member benefits that are relevant or accessible to Regions 1 - 6 members only. IEEE should implement similar benefits of local relevance across all regions.

Category - Member Benefits

This recommendation has been completed. The Globalization of Professional Activities Committee was formed, and the following programs have been implemented:

- Expanded the use of the IEEE Job Site by members and companies in India, Singapore, and Australia. Results being evaluated for possible next steps;
- Implemented a portable RSS feed capability to aggregate and feed webinars from the IEEE-USA site to myIEEE;
- Expanded the distribution of eBooks, webinars, and the IEEE Job Site;
- Implemented and promoted IEEE-USA webinar and eBook access to all members from IEEE memberNet.

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Operating rules in different countries, as well as IEEE's ability to negotiate on behalf of 200,000 members in the USA vs. much smaller numbers in other parts of the world, make it difficult to provide equal benefits globally. As new member benefits are developed, they are made available to as many members as possible. Several discount programs were added in 2009 and 2010 that are available in multiple countries (e.g., MOZY.com, DELL in 57 countries). More information on these technology discounts for IEEE members is available at http://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/discounts/technology.html

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- 8. Sections and chapters need a web-based payment solution for small local events that is: (a) Low cost; (b) Secure and immediate; (c) Capable of depositing into a concentration banking account or international equivalent with event and payer identification.**

Category - Business/Financial Operations

This recommendation has been completed. In the fourth quarter of 2010, MGA added Credit Card Processing functionality to the vTools.Meetings tool. A joint project between IEEE Financial Services and MGA has been successfully completed and functionality has been enabled for all Sections, Chapters, and Affinity Groups in Regions 1-7 that are using vTools.Meetings (<http://meetings.vtools.ieee.org/>) and Concentration Banking. Credit card payments for meetings can now be accepted with funds deposited directly in the Section's Concentration Banking accounts. A solution for Sections, Chapters, and Affinity Groups in Regions 8-10 is being actively investigated with anticipated pilot program launching in the fourth quarter of 2011.

Credit Card Processing statistics (as of 13 April 2011)

Total number of meetings that used payment functionality	86
Total number of payments	627
Total number of dollars processed	\$17,469 (US and CA)
Total number of organizational units (Sections, Chapters, Affinity Groups) using the functionality	43

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- 9. Provide support and tools for the creation and maintenance of easy to update section web sites with "single sign-on" authentication via IEEE web accounts, featuring at least blogs, meeting calendars, and member**

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surveys. Use commonly available best practice technologies not requiring programmer support for day to day use.

Category - IT Operations

This recommendation has been completed. The MGA vTools team made available the following tools: vTools.WebInABox, EWH 2.0, EWH 1.0, vTools.Meetings, and vTools.Surveys. (<http://vtools.ieee.org>)

Free web hosting solutions for IEEE organizational units (OUs) and their activities include:

- vTools.WebInABox - a wizard-like tool that can generate a simple web site without a technical webmaster. WebInABox uses web services to automatically update web pages using the latest information from IEEE data sources, such as current officers, Chapters, and Affinity Groups, and a calendar of upcoming meetings from vTools.Meetings.
- EWH 2.0 - the newest web hosting offering. It exclusively offers WordPress, an open source content management system that can also be used for blogging. It offers many features that will help users create and maintain their sites.
- EWH 1.0 - the original web hosting option offered by IEEE MGA. Web sites that are actively maintained and highly customized using HTML/PHP are best served on EWH 1.0.

Blogging support is provided via WordPress hosted on EWH 2.0. Blogs can be stand alone or easily integrated with vTools.WebInABox or a custom site hosted elsewhere.

Meetings calendar support is provided via vTools.Meetings. Calendar data can be easily integrated with any site or a tool via HTML or RSS.

Survey functionality is provided via vTools.Surveys. This tool can be used to quickly create online surveys using intuitive interface and distribute them via email, web link, etc. Collected results can be easily analyzed and graphical reports can be shared with others.

Statistics (as of 13 April 2011)

vTools.WebInABox	127 active sites, 16,627 visits by 9,680 visitors from 109 countries/territories, 218,474 page views
EWH 2.0	120 active sites including web sites and blogs
EWH 1.0	over 1,500 web sites hosted using varying technology such as HTML, PHP, Joomla, Drupal, Dokuwiki
vTools.Meetings	2,750 total number of meetings created (1,750 with registration enabled), 17,733 registrants

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10. **Implement sustained membership options for all membership grades exclusive of Student grade:**
- **Single dues payment for multiple years/life-long membership;**
 - **Increasing benefits in proportion to the length of renewal;**
 - **Lowers IEEE administrative expenses related to "annual" membership cycles."**

Category - Membership

The project was separated into two phases.

Phase I – Completed in 2010. A Pilot Loyalty Program was launched in March 2010 to provide free access to five eLearning tutorials to first year full grade renewing members. Process and delivery capabilities were confirmed, and the program achieved moderate success in the arrears outreach process. The program was upgraded to include access to 10 eLearning tutorials and three months free access to MDL Light, and re-launched to first year higher grade renewing members for the 2011 renewal cycle, beginning in October 2010. Results of that launch are being evaluated, and the viability of loyalty programs offered to other categories of members will be considered as future options.

Phase II – A non-discounted two and three year IEEE membership option was developed and approved in concept by the MGA Board in 2009. The MGA Board further requested the development of a multi-year Society membership option and a five year discounted membership option. In addition to these multi-year membership options, straw proposals to allow for automatic renewal and monthly payment of renewal bills were also requested. A survey is being conducted to higher grade members to determine which of these options provide the most appeal, and the results will be presented to the MGA Board in June 2011. Implementation of any of these options will be deferred until the new membership system is operational in 2012.

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The following recommendations were presented to the delegates but were not ranked in the top ten. They are being shown for your information, in a random order.

- Public Awareness and New Technology - Develop IEEE Brand awareness globally through marketing and communicating the value of IEEE and its professions to industry, schools, and the public.
- Business/Financial Operations - IEEE should provide tools that interface with Concentration Banking to enable: electronic bill payment, electronic funds transfer, budget tracking with common financial programs, L-50 interface.
- Recruitment/Retention (Membership) - Research, implement, and communicate IEEE benefits and engagement opportunities across the member life cycle, with emphasis on the needs of young members (in collaboration with Student Activities and GOLD). Report by 2Q2009.
- Recruitment/Retention (Membership) - To improve support from member employers: Develop technical and professional tutorials and training (e.g., Expert Now) to match member employer needs. Survey membership to prioritize content. Content should be made free or at reduced cost to organizational units. Highlight employer while increasing publicity of member's IEEE contributions. Initial report 1Q2009 and review annually to ensure currency with members technical needs
- Membership - Create a volunteer recognition program to acknowledge volunteer service by having MGA send a service pin and certificate to volunteers at five year milestone intervals, allowing members to display their IEEE service. Each milestone item shall be uniquely designed to display length of service.
- Membership - Present new members with modular, online/computer-based training upon completion of application process. Training shall introduce all aspects of IEEE, particularly a member's role within MGA model. Training resources should show how to leverage IEEE membership for the benefit of the member, IEEE, and society.
- Operations - The MGA Board and the Technical Activities Board to review the issues among Sections, Societies, and Chapters associated with conference planning and management. In particular this would include early information exchange, shared knowledge, cooperation, and resources to clarify the expectations of any of these units in conducting conferences.
- Member Benefits - To promote involvement in accordance with the core goals of the IEEE, provide free membership in one Technical Society for a limited number of years after first paying full dues.
- Member Growth and Development - Gather and supplement the best resources of all appropriate entities (including IEEE-USA, Technical Management Council, Region/Society LD Committees, and EA) to establish a curriculum of standardized leadership training with appropriate metrics to empower IEEE leadership with skills needed to foster the engagement, life cycle support, and growth of the member.
- Public Awareness and New Technology - Be a leader in sustainable development, i.e., development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Public Awareness and New Technology - Create a program that addresses problems and issues of a global nature by improving collaboration between IEEE and stakeholders.