
Open Forum

Breakout Session Notes

Diversifying Volunteers + Leadership So It's Not the Same 10 People

- Members need to have clear direction on how to volunteer for the society.
- Societies can find volunteers through canvassing or recruitment
- Societies should make a culture where senior members find the “invitation to volunteer” to be part of the mission.
 - Reach out directly to department chairs and ask for their help in bringing post-doctoral students into membership
- Work to make volunteering easier and more beneficial for your members. Allow volunteers to work outside of regular business hours. When possible, provide meals.
- Highlight the non-financial benefits for volunteering
- Create opportunities to network for volunteers
 - Meet and greet with the board
 - Arranged meetings between younger volunteers with more senior experts, with the understanding that the expert will pick up the tab for coffee
- Several societies have various “ambassador” programs to increase connection to membership

Transition to Open Access Journals: Friend or Foe

- Open Access favors larger publishers with scale, which can benefit commercial publishers over nonprofits.
 - Would also change audience from institutional customers to individual readers.
 - Some societies have seen downloads increase from Open Access
- Under the current model some societies have seen subscriptions make up about 40% of publication revenue. In order to replace that revenue in a fully Open Access world they would anticipate doubling the cost to authors.
 - Societies expressed interest in going fully Gold Open Access, but that did not seem financial stable.
- Government initiatives like Plan S exist to promote Open Access under the idea that publishers are unnecessarily restricting access to scientific information being made available broadly and publishers make too much money.
 - Some felt that the rationale for Open Access was weaker in physics than in other disciplines because there was less of an appetite from the general public.
- SPIE noted the distinction between journals and proceedings publications and the different value propositions of both.
 - About half of their journals have moved to Open Access, but it is not clear the process is achieving a reduced cost structure
- AAS recently moved from a subscription model to fully Open Access

- Pricing structure places authors in different tiers depending on the size of the article—allows for authors without as much funding to still publish.
- 15% of the budget is allocated to an author support fund to provide funding for those unable to afford article charges.
- Model has seen success with the number of downloads exceeding the number of Astronomers
- New model is also attracting foreign researchers, especially from China
- Read to publish may lay the groundwork for later Gold Open Access Status

Sharing Wins + Failures in Fundraising

- Societies have various reasons to try and advance their fundraising efforts
 - Additional source of revenue in light of increased costs
 - A new way to engage with the community: members, international members, industry
 - Learning best practices in the association and nonprofit space
- Target audiences
 - Members
 - Corporations
 - Regional foundations
 - Government sponsorships
 - Philanthropists
- How to build internal capacity
 - Board development is important when talking about fundraising
 - Fundraising training matters--consultants can supply information to get you started
 - Personal connections are very important – some can get a yes better if they know them
- Fundraising best practices
 - Lowest cost ratio is to approach individuals – best return with 1:1 relationships
 - Fundraisers need to be able to tell the story and make a case for both specific projects and the organization as a whole
 - Donors like to provide funding for students
 - Year-round engagement of donors is important
 - Provide a “giving menu” for potential donors
- How to approach and get money out of foundations
 - Go in at the program level and work your way up
 - Important do the homework of the foundation to see if there is a fit – how can we help you solve the problem
- Endowments vs current spend funds
 - Endowments focus on leaving a legacy.
 - Endowments need to meet a minimum amount and have administrative costs attached to them.
- Areas for collaboration
 - Could multiple societies partner on fundraising for education?
 - AIP Research has done a landscape analysis of Member Society education and professional development activities that could showcase areas of overlap
 - Foundations like to fund a collaboration impact with multiple societies
- Open questions
 - How do you build partnership outside your community?
 - How best to recognize donors?
 - Acknowledgement on the website? At meetings? Having a reception for donors?
 - Do you offer unrestricted giving? How does that change donor behavior?

How to Deal with People Who Don't Want to Consider Science

- This is a long-term issue that has resurfaced in the public throughout history.
- Societies would like to become more proactive in building trust with the general public. They need to better understand the strategies to do that and what the attitudes and values are.
- Solutions
 - Using the public's curiosity to reach them and inspire learning more about the sciences.
 - Partnering with those who have trusted platforms, including science influencers.
 - Focus on meeting people where they are and don't expect to bring everyone along.
 - Focus on the scientific method and explaining the evolving nature of scientific knowledge.
 - People trust and use technology like cellphones without necessarily understanding how it works. How can the physical sciences leverage similar levels of trust?
 - Leverage tools and frameworks that exist, such as the materials the Union for Concerned Scientists have developed.
 - Use data and research to show evidence.
 - Ask questions to better understand the points of view of those who don't believe in science or evidence.
- Challenges
 - Sensationalized media coverage can lack nuance, which instills fear.
 - Black and white thinking and lack of critical thinking are barriers to science education.
 - Many people are unaware of advances in science; a study showed that 73% of Americans could not name a scientist.

Combatting Disinformation in an AI World

- This session could easily have been titled "How to control AI in a disinformation world" due to the fallibility of large language models and potential for data corruption.
- Corruption of the data in training databases was a central topic of. Societies are worried about the cleanliness of data and the impact of bad data on outputs. Are there opportunities for traceability between outputs and the databases they came from?
- Societies are generally considered to be data providers, so how do we work with our members and across Societies to understand the issue and collaborate on best practices?
- Especially for organizations that produce journals, ownership of information put into databases is a huge concern.
 - NSF released a dear colleague letter to share data ownership implications with scientists and cautioning them about sharing their research in AI models.
- Controls for data quality and validation are needed both on inputs and outputs.
 - Crystallographers have some data validation processes in place
 - Checks and balances to validate data is helpful on the input side
 - Signatures to show someone can vouch for the data is helpful on the publishing side. Other ways to validate would be helpful.
 - A resource for evaluating data when you're not sure of its validity would be valuable to members.
- Societies want to better understand the implications of AI in publishing.
 - Publishers recommend, but do not don't require authors to have their data sets publicly available when they publish a paper. Data availability would allow the public to better vet the data.
 - Practices can be put in place to give readers an understanding of the vetting that happened or whether vetting was unable to be done
- Societies agreed that guardrails for the use of AI are necessary.
 - NIST released a draft framework for risk management- <https://www.nist.gov/itl/ai-risk-management-framework>
 - Third party organizations are forming to assess algorithms for bias, set standards

- Guardrails should address how to shape responsible and ethical use of AI.
- Traceability is an interesting concept Societies may want to further explore.
- Better understanding and maybe even labeling of open vs closed environments .
- Do people know whether their data is going out the backdoor to be used in a LLM?