

Report of the ISOC 2005 Election Committee

The Internet Society

July 28, 2005

The election cycle and Committee activities

Formation of the committee.

At the ISOC Board of Trustees meeting in Barcelona in May 2004, I was appointed as chair of the Election Committee. The membership of the committee was approved by the Board at its November meeting in Washington, and consists of:

George Sadowsky, Chair
Nick Trio, ISOC member
Rosa Delgado, Trustee
Ole Jacobsen, ISOC member

Erik Huizer (Trustee) agreed to join the mailing list and act as a "hot standby" in the event that any of the committee members had to resign their membership in the committee.

Three Trustees were to be elected for the period 2005-2008, two by ISOC Organizational Members, and one by ISOC Chapters. The decision was taken by the Board that there were to be no elections of Trustees by paying individual members because the paying individual member program has not yet gotten off the ground. Since that decision was taken, a paying individual member program has been initiated, and next year's election process will need to determine whether the threshold number of such members has been achieved. If so, that will trigger the resumption of Trustees by paying individual members.

Setting the election calendar.

The ISOC by-laws set out a set of criteria for the timing of the Board of Trustees Nomination and Election processes. Based upon the possibility of the Board meeting in Luxembourg in conjunction with the ICANN meeting scheduled to be held there during July 11-15, 2005, Margaret Wasserman, Chair of the Nominations Committee and I proposed the following election calendar which was approved by the Board:

Call for Nominations	17-Jan-05
Nomination Period Closes	1-Mar-05
Candidates Announced, Petition Period Opens	16-Mar-05
Petition Period Closed.....	15-Apr-05
Ballot completed	22-Apr-05
Ballots Posted (e-mail).....	29-Apr-05
Election Date.....	1-Jun-05
Certification of Election.....	10-Jun-05
Challenge Period Closes	20-Jun-05
Response to Challenges	6-Jul-05
Annual general Meeting (this date or later)	9-Jul-05

On March 2, 2005, Margaret Wasserman observed the following: " We have a fairly long list of qualified and interested nominees ... , and we are in the process of interviewing all of the qualified candidates to make a decision about which ones to include in the election slate. Unfortunately, it is currently challenging ... to arrange enough time for all of the interviews." Margaret noted that providing additional time would avoid discrimination against any of the candidates who had applied late in the nominations process. Margaret then asked whether it would be possible to provide several more weeks for the Nominations Committee to finish its work.

I was sympathetic to Margaret's request. As chair of the Nominating Committee twice before, I know that each time we received a flurry of nominations at the last minute, and we were forced to rely on prior knowledge of the applicants rather than on additional evidence that we could specify and collect. We probably would not have interviewed the people that enough of us knew reasonably well, but I remember that there were several nominations that had to be judged solely on written material, and that's neither fair for the nominee nor optimal for the organization. Past Nominating Committees did not have the slack time to interview potential candidates, and Margaret's introduction of the additional time seems like a worthwhile improvement in the process.

Fortunately in the interim, the Board had decided to hold its summer meeting in conjunction with the IETF Meeting in Paris in early August 2005, thereby introducing slack in the election process schedule. With the Board's approval, the following revised schedule was approved by e-mail vote of the Board on March 28th:

Call for Nominations	17-Jan-05
Nomination Period Closes	1-Mar-05
Candidate Annual, Petition. Period Opens.....	31-Mar-05
Petition Period Closed.....	30-Apr-05
Ballot completed	14-May-05
Ballots Posted (e-mail).....	24-May-05
Election Date.....	28-Jun-05
Certification of Election.....	7-Jul-05
Challenge Period Closes	17-Jul-05
Response to Challenges	2-Aug-05
Annual general Meeting.....	5 Aug-05

Establishing the ballot

On April 12, 2005, the Nominating Committee announced the following slates:

Candidates for Organizational Membership Election (in alphabetical order):

Marilyn Cade, USA
David Isenberg, USA
Daniel Karrenberg, The Netherlands
Glenn Ricart, USA

Candidates for the Chapters Election:

Alex Corenthin, Senegal (in alphabetical order)
Richard St. Clair, Niue

During the petition process, one petition was received, from Veni Markowski to be a candidate in the Chapters Election. The Nominating Committee certified that the requisite number of chapters had signed his petition, and Veni was added to ballot for the Chapters Election.

Determining voter eligibility

ISOC staff members and officers David McAuley and Jim Galvin assisted the Committee in determining voter eligibility. Based upon the criteria established in the by-laws, it was determined that there were 77 organizational members eligible to participate in the voting and 75 chapters eligible to vote. Of the 75 chapters, 57 confirmed their eligibility but 18 did not respond to Galvin's message regarding the ballot.

The candidates forum.

The Election Committee wanted to encourage discussion among the candidates regarding their opinions on issues which might reasonably come before the Board and therefore before them if they were elected to serve as a Trustee. A special e-mail address was established to which members could send questions and issues that they wished to be put to the candidates. Suggested questions would be vetted by the Committee and possibly recast before being submitted to the candidates.

The software finally chose to implement the forum provided for a way for the candidates not only to respond to the questions asked, but also to interact among themselves. The web site was advertised to the ISOC community as being viewable by anyone. Candidates were encouraged to view the site frequently and be liberal in expressing their views about the content of the questions and the views of others. Electors were encouraged to pay attention to the views expressed by the candidates, and not to vote until the Forum had concluded and they had discussed the candidates' positions with their respective constituencies.

In order to allow for reconsideration of views and votes as a result of the discussion, the Committee requested that the Board change one aspect of the rules for voting. Current election procedures require that in case multiple votes are cast by the same voting entity that the first vote cast is accepted and subsequent votes are rejected. The committee requested that this be changed so that the last vote be accepted instead.

The Board considered this request but did not approve it. In communicating this decision to the committee, Fred Baker noted: "The fundamental concern raised by the Board was that this change encourages reactive behavior, with changes of votes from time to time, which enhances the possibilities of votes with improper local process or of confusion as to the content of a party's final vote. It noted that running the discussion of the candidates in parallel with the election under the present regime has the effect of encouraging votes to come in at the last minute, which has its own dangers. Life is not perfect either way, but the board felt that the proposal to allow changes of vote didn't improve matters and possibly made them harder."

Ten questions were posted on the Forum, and most candidates responded to all of the questions. However there was very little discussion among the candidates, and by and large, many of the responses to specific questions were not dissimilar in substance. The manner in which the substance was conveyed — the style and depth of the responses — was a differentiating factor. It was somewhat of a disappointment to the Committee that there was not more internal discussion

among the candidates to provide more of a debate over issues and sharpen the space of issues with which ISOC now contends.

Withdrawal of Candidate

Two hours before the Candidates' Forum closed, we received two responses from Marilyn Cade, first implying and then stating that she was withdrawing her candidacy for the Board. Both messages were posted on the Forum. Prior to those messages, Marilyn had not participated at all in the on-line Forum. She later explained to me that the depth of her involvement in ICANN and in her new consulting business precluded further effort; she had hoped to be able to manage additional responsibilities, but found that she could not.

Ballot structure, processing, counting and results

Discussions started in early spring with ISOC staff regarding the mechanics of the balloting. Staff first recommended voting through a web interface and special software, but then reverted to an e-mail based method given the time required for system construction as well as a planned significant platform shift scheduled near the time that the ballots would be counted. Given the anticipated volume of ballots — perhaps about 100 total — it was decided that manual processing of e-mail ballots was the most efficient way to proceed.

On May 24, 2005, ballots were e-mailed from ISOC Headquarters to all primary designated voting representatives for both elections. Embedded in each e-mail ballot was a unique secret token or PIN, formatted as a letter followed by a 7-digit semi-random number, that would serve to confirm the authenticity of their completed ballot.

On June 29, 2005 Nick Trio, a member of the Election Committee and I went to ISOC Headquarters to count the ballots. The process was constructed so that it would not be possible for anyone involved in the process to determine the relationship between any specific and a specific vote. There were no anomalies in the voting process.

Results were tabulated using a spreadsheet, applying the appropriate weights in the case of organizations. The results are:

For the Organizational Member election:

Daniel Karrenberg.....	92 votes
Glenn Ricart.....	64 votes
David Isenberg.....	37 votes
Marilyn Cade (by ballot count).....	25 votes
Marilyn Cade (official).....	0 votes

Accordingly, Daniel Karrenberg and Glen Ricart are elected to a three year term on the Board of Trustees.

I am reporting Marilyn's ballot count here for the sake of completeness. However, according to Committee procedures, a candidate who resigns after the ballots have been distributed and before the election date shall have his/her vote recorded officially as zero

We determined that the relative order of the candidates to represent the Organizational members would not have changed if the ballots had been counted on a non-weighted basis.

For the Chapters election:

Veni Markowski27 votes
Alex Corenthin.....14 votes
Richard St. Clair3 votes

Accordingly, Veni Markowski is elected to three year term on the Board of Trustees.

It may be of interest to compare participation rates for last year and this year.

This year, for the election of Trustees by Organization Members, 77 members were eligible to vote and 37 ballots were received. The corresponding numbers for last year, 2004, were 88 eligible and 47 received.

This year, for the election of Trustees by Chapters, 75 members were eligible to vote and 43 ballots were received. The corresponding numbers for last year, 2004, were 75 eligible and 39 received.

The results were announced shortly thereafter first to the candidates and to the Board, and then to the membership. Unfortunately I did not remember that the announcement should have included both the new Trustees and the IETF-nominated trustee, Fred Baker, whose appointment was announced a few days later as a result. I made the error, and I regret it..

Challenge period.

The Society's by-laws provide for a period of time after the announcement of the election results for those results to be challenged by certain people. Challenges are directed to the ISCO Chief Executive Officer. No challenges were received.

Suggestions for future elections processes

1. I believe that the "first vote counts" policy should be reviewed by the Board. If the intent of the questioning period and potential discussion among candidates is to elicit information about them and their views that may not have been visible or available prior to that period, then it may useful to allow an elector to change their mind on the basis of that information. To curb vacillation from any cause, a low limit could be put on the number of changes that are allowed. This would also provide an easy way of correcting voter input errors.

2. I believe that the Candidates Forum is a useful idea, but that it did not live up to our expectations this year; in fact, it differed little from an earlier model in which one question was asked to all candidates each week during the discussion period, and the responses were posted on the web. I would encourage future election committees to evolve this idea to a format that provides more interaction and more sharpening of views and differentiation of candidates on the basis of those more precise views.

3. The next Election Committee may be faced with conducting three elections if the number of paying individual members passes a threshold level. This will require running a new election with hundreds if not thousands of voters. I encourage the next Election Committee chair to initiate a comparison of developing a system to support such an election with the possibility of

outsourcing it, considering relative costs, internal staff capabilities and staff work load. It's not clear to me that ISOC has a relative advantage in subsuming this function in-house. In either case, since this will be a new operation, examining the alternatives should be initiated promptly.

4. Margaret Wasserman's wise choice in extending the nominations period from 4 to 6 weeks should be institutionalized. The Board could maintain the same one month period in which nominations are to be solicited and provided, and then provide an additional two or more week period for doing whatever is needed to obtain assurances that the ballot to be presented consists of the best nominees. I do not believe that any bylaws change is needed to make such a change if future Nominating and Election Committees so desire.

Expressions of thanks for assistance

The Committee wishes to thank all of the candidates for their willingness to be considered, and hopes that those who were not elected will find ways to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Internet Society.

The Committee wishes to thank the ISOC staff, particularly David McAuley, for their technical and administrative support in carrying out the voting process.

Respectfully submitted



George Sadowsky
Chair Elections Committee

July 28, 2005