
TUG 2016, Bond Place Hotel, Toronto
Annual General Meeting Minutes
25 July 2016, 4 p.m.

Sue DeMeritt, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by Jim Hefferon.

Jim introduced the members of the Board of Directors who were present. He then presented slides giving a snapshot of TUG. These included reasons why people should join TUG and reasons why TUG is so important to the community. Financial matters were reviewed very generally. Challenges to TUG were discussed. The biggest challenge is membership, which is declining. This led to a discussion of dues, with a slide showing changes since 2006. [The slides are available at <http://tug.org/tug2016/slides/agm.pdf>.]

Jim then invited Kaveh Bazargan to speak, per Kaveh's request.

Kaveh Bazargan made a statement announcing his resignation as President of the T_EX Users Group. In 2015 he had been elected president; however, he was subsequently suspended by the Board. He noted that if his suspension were lifted, he would be faced with a Board that he would not be able to work with.

Jim pointed out that there is an upcoming election in 2017 when TUG will elect a new president and board members.

There were no immediate comments from the membership.

The floor was opened for questions and discussion.

CV Rajagopal stood up and started to discuss how his company's reputation has been marred as a result of a lawsuit by Kaveh Bazargan. Norbert Preining and Jim Hefferon asked CVR not to bring private legal matters into this meeting. CVR continued and asked the TUG Board if they agreed with the statements that Kaveh had circulated earlier in the day. Jim Hefferon stated that the Board does not wish to be involved in the parties' lawsuits, but noted that the Board does not agree with all of the points in the letter that had been circulated. [The letter will be published verbatim in the TUG 2016 proceedings issue of *TUGboat*.]

Matthew Skala started a discussion about membership: What is needed to increase membership? The number of members attending the annual conference is mostly the same every year.

Mike Sofka stated that he feels membership has dropped because so much is now free on the web. Getting younger people involved is crucial.

David Walden mentioned that many other groups are facing the same issues. People don't want to join a group with only paper journals.

Michael Doob pointed out that younger people are just not joining. It is hard to know what the answer is. Having personal contact with a possible member seems to help.

Kim Nesbitt discussed why it is important to get information out about why people should join TUG.

Jim Hefferon noted that TUG has been trying many different avenues for attracting more members.

Paulo Ney de Souza said that he has no answer to membership issues but does have a suggestion for the resultant financial problems. TUG has a number of institutional members, but many libraries aren't allowed to use funds for institutional memberships. It would be better to make *TUGboat* available as an electronic-only journal to institutions for a larger fee. [Not mentioned at the meeting is the fact that non-member subscriptions to *TUGboat* have been available for years.]

Christina Thiele pointed out that TUG originally had a large membership because there was no web. Today's people are digital. Perhaps TUG could try to get donations digitally from folks in small amounts. If we come in from a different direction it might be successful in finding more members.

Christian Gagné asked if the number of members includes institutional members. [The institutions are not included, but the individuals named by their institutions *are* included.] He would like to see the TUG website used as a portal. Jim Hefferon discussed what ideas are being pursued. Barbara Beeton reported that AMS has asked members what kinds of programs they would like to see; most of the topics mentioned were already in existence, but their availability was not generally known.

Mike Sofka discussed that TUG does not provide all the information that people would like to have. They have to have a reason to join.

Frank Mittelbach pointed out that the original reason for TUG was to get information to users; TUG was the only place where information was available, such as finding support for \TeX infrastructure. Asking for support for something that is not obvious is difficult. He supports the idea of donations as being a feasible theme. He also agrees with Paulo that libraries are usually not permitted to use funds to join as institutional members.

Behdad Esfahbod reported that the reason he originally left was because he did not feel he was getting anything for his membership. Jim Hefferon mentioned the electronic access.

Jennifer Claudio suggested a social media approach where people can get what they want online. Perhaps scholarship programs can get people involved. "Lifetime" membership builds commitment. It would give more incentive to keep coming to TUG, spreading info to friends.

John Plaice suggested that there was an elephant sitting in the room. The president was overthrown although a majority voted for him; the Board collectively overthrew the president. Why would people want to join if a coup had taken place?

Federico Garcia asked about the \TeX user population and the funds available to TUG. This can be a matter of marketing; people don't know about TUG, and we need to get the word out.

John Kerr suggested advertising in technical magazines. Readers of these magazines may not know that TUG exists.

Dave Walden stated that someone suggested to him that a TUG blog would be a good idea. This is a matter of finding a volunteer.

Matthew Skala proposed that maybe TUG is not giving people what they want. It is not what the organization needs—it is what supporting the product needs. Frank Mittelbach added that people may feel that the dues are too much for what they are getting. Maybe a new model is needed.

Christina Thiele added that a blog is a good idea; users can write about what they are doing so others can see it. Other users will read and spread the word.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.