5 Knowledge-Based Decision-Making to Reach an Informed Group Conscience Questions

Electronic Devices at AWSC

Question 1: What do we know about our members' or prospective members' wants, needs, or preferences that are relevant to this discussion?

Currently laptops are used by most if not all members of AWSC policy meeting. As an observer, this seems to be an efficient use of technology. It would be difficult to anticipate all the documents needed to be printed and brought to the ASWC. It would be difficult to conduct the meeting and then return to their rooms/homes to document all that happened. They are able to access information on their laptops in response to discussion during the meeting.
This same advantage could be appreciated by participants in the AWSC. They would not be required to take the time and money to print all the needed documents, bring them to the meeting, take notes on them and then go home and start all over reorganizing them for sharing with their districts.
See comments on #1 Applied to Use of Computers at the Area Assemblies.

Members that use computers want to be able to use computers at AWSC.
Other members hate sitting next to a member using a computer.
Members don't want to print using up their paper and ink. It gets expensive.

1. Our members want to use electronic devices to take notes at the AWSC meetings.
2. Some members have a difficult time hand writing notes due to physical limitations
3. By using electronic devices, it would cut down on the amount of paper used thus helping with the planet's ecology
4. Presentation handouts can be shared electronically instead of making paper copies

Question 2: What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue?

Area 61 has apparently followed the WSO guideline at the AWSC meetings and Assemblies. The historical position of the Board of Trustees relevant to use of computers at the WSC is enlightening. The large amount of data resulting from thoughtful questioning, including from conference participants was helpful in understanding their position.

The Area no longer mail but now email so members must print or put on computer.
The meeting goes long enough that most will have to plug in.

1. Most of the AWSC members receive the meeting documents via email that can then be down loaded and saved on their computer
2. Electronic/digital materials are easier and faster to distribute during the meetings
3. Facilitate common access to documents
4. Presentation handouts can be shared electronically instead of making paper copies

Question 3: What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion?

See #1 above and on Applied to Use of Computers at the Area Assemblies.

Members put their noses in their computer and don't interact with others.
Members will be on other pages other than Al-Anon business.
Some play games, answer emails, and actually check their Facebook page.
Too many may have to plug in and there may be an extra cost from the hotel.

1. Many members want to use the technology available and we need to move ahead with the times
2. Younger people prefer to use the available technologies
3. On the other hand, older members are more tentative about the use of computers and other devices

Question 4: What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)?

Pros:

Allowing individuals to make their own decision on use or not of mobile devices promotes autonomy and recognizes personal boundaries.

Save on paper and ink.
That fact that at AWSC we sit in a square, we wouldn't distract each other as much.
Members may be able to get the latest information if sent late.
No more rustling of papers.

1. Electronics makes it easier to keep in contact with our members
2. Schedule changes and updates to materials could be done dynamically and everyone sees the updates instantly on their device

Cons:

Abuse of technology (texting, games, excess request for technology support) could be disruptive to other participants and staff. Guidelines for use could help to address this concern. Identification that this is a privilege, not a right, might be considered.
See #4 on Applied to Use of Computers at the Area Assemblies.

Some members may be distracted by computers.
Some members may not pay attention to meeting as much.
Some members are not tech. savvy and may be intimated by others.

1. Sharing information and documents with other members during the meeting could be a distraction to current activity
2. Some members' perception of what is important to share can be different than others' perception

3. Not all devices can easily share information with other dissimilar devices and could be a violation of Concepts Three and Four.
4. Side conversation rule may be violated

Question 5: What do we wish we knew, but don't?

Have we asked members of the policy committee and of the AWSC what their wishes and concerns are about access to laptops and mobile devices at these meetings? That information would be most helpful. How would participants feel about setting aside locations in the meeting rooms for use or nonuse of mobile devices and laptops? Would this be helpful?
How might access to technology be restricted in meeting rooms? As we are consistently in WI Rapids and at the Mead, it would be wise to explore access to towers/signals as well as outlets for those who might require them.

How many really want to do this…..show of hands would be nice.
What the minority opinion is?

Other:

My thought on AWSC is all who are there are engaged in the "conference" and may use electronic devices for record keeping etc. I feel a wider use at AWSC is feasible with the limited number of attendants at the conferences.