

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

Applied to Use of Computers at the Area Assemblies

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

The use of mobile technology is fast growing and pervasive in our society. Lap tops as well as multiple other mobile devices are used to access internet data, to communicate with others, to store and then access information. The process and expense of printing is no longer the primary method of accessing and storing information. It is likely that many members and especially younger members or potential members have grown to expect access to mobile data.

Members that use computers want to be able to use computers at Assemblies.
Other members hate sitting next to a member using a computer.
Members are easily distracted by computers in front of them.
Members don't want to print using up their paper and ink. It gets expensive.
Some members are unable to take notes with their hands.

- The use of electronic devices would facilitate note-taking
- The use of technology could enhance our communication at all levels
- For an individual who has a disability, it is easier to take notes on a computer than by hand.

People want to use electronic devices (phones, tablets, computers etc) during assembly meetings.

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

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.

- Is the area able to deal with the quick dissemination of information during meetings
- Presentation handouts can be shared electronically instead of making paper copies

That electronic devices can be used for specific conference tasks, such as accessing related information, sharing information, communication for conference reason....

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

See #1

Members put their noses in their computer and don't interact with others.

Members will be on other pages other than AI-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.

It is almost impossible to make plugging in nice and neat at Assemblies.

As our members age some will need the use of devices as their hands don't work as well as they use to.

- Electronic/digital materials are easier and faster to distribute
- If computers or other electronic devices are allowed to be used, the assembly would need to be guaranteed adequate Internet access.

That electronic devices are being used for above stated reasons, in addition to entertainment and personal matters during the meeting, i.e. facebook, playing games etc

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.

Members may be able to get the latest information if sent late.

No more rustling of papers.

We can keep "up with the times"

Pros of allowing the use of electronic devices is that many people are now "electronics-bound" in that they are not using paper products but rather devices (this should not need the use of internet connection if planned accordingly). For specified tasks, access to the internet may facilitate the conference purposes such as demonstrating web access or simply the use of a presentation software which may or may not be internet-dependent.

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.

Many 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 intimidated by others.

The plugging in problem would be huge.

We might also need more tables as computer may take up more room.

Internet access allows information to just be “out” there and could be seen by non-members

The cons are

1. The need for more internet access if access is open to everyone attending the conference.
2. Lack of participation or loss of focus on the purpose of the conference when other “entertainment-wares” can be accessed.
3. Need for more electrical outlets and managing of cords and cable, which can create walking hazards.

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

Have we asked our membership what their wishes and concerns are about access to laptops and mobile devices at Assemblies? That information would be most helpful.

How would participants feel about setting aside locations in the conference center for use or nonuse of mobile devices and laptops? Would this be helpful?

How might access to technology be restricted in conference settings? 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.

How many really don't want this and why?

What the minority opinion is?

Will we lose members if they are not allowed to do this?

Will we lose members if they are allowed to do this?

- What the future technologies consist of
- Will members misuse the devices during the assembly

We wish we knew the implications of limiting members access to internet and/or electronic devices during a conference.