

I. SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS - PURPOSE AND MANAGEMENT

A. ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSE

Special Interest Groups are formal organizational units of ASIS, created and maintained by members with similar technical interests. In essence, SIGs are societies within the Society - semi-autonomous bodies of members operating within a standard set of bylaws. SIGs provide forums for ASIS members who share similar interests or specialties within information science. Through the SIGs, members can pursue narrower, substantive subjects, while ASIS focuses on the broader interests of the larger membership base.

The existence of SIGs is authorized by the ASIS Bylaws, which state in Section 8.1: "A Special Interest Group (SIG) consists of a group of Members concerned with a particular field of interest in documentation or information science, and is chartered by the Board of Directors. Groups shall retain their charters at the discretion of the Board of Directors."

The Bylaws, in Section 8.11, also state the purpose of SIGs: "The purpose of each Special Interest Group shall include but not be limited to: 1) advising the Board of Directors or the Society officers on matters pertaining to the Group's special interest or area; 2) organizing technical programs for such interests and areas including programs at Conferences of the Society; 3) collecting and disseminating information concerning its special interest; and 4) representing the Society in international, inter-disciplinary, and inter-organizational activities, either as a Group or through one or more of its officers or members, at the request of the Board of Directors or such pertinent Committee or Committees established by the Board of Directors."

An additional statement of the purpose of SIGs is included in the "Standard Bylaws" for SIGs: ". . . to provide an organization through which all members of ASIS having a special interest in the disciplines covered by the SIG may share their professional activities and studies, through meetings, publications, and other organized activity."

SIGs differ from other organizational units in ASIS in some significant ways. SIGs are semi-autonomous "networks" of members, organized by the members themselves to pursue interests in particular, substantive areas. Committees, on the other hand, are created by the Board of Directors to provide advice and counsel to the Board on matters of concern to the officers or the Society as a whole. Finally, Chapters are created strictly on a geographic basis, providing a local microcosm of the Society-at-large, and representing members with the same diverse interests as the membership-at-large. Each of these units is a resource to the others, and issues of corresponding interest should be shared freely among them. SIGs, Chapters and Committees are encouraged to work together in developing programs and projects to meet the needs of ASIS members.

The differences among SIGs, Chapters and Committees should be considered when planning activities, so that common efforts can be coordinated and duplication of effort can be avoided. The mutual goal of all three types of organizational units is to maximize the service ASIS provides to its members and the information community.

Creating and Modifying SIGs

Creating SIGs. In order to create a new SIG, interested members must follow a simple, but important, process that is designed to offer some assurance that a chartered SIG will be able to maintain a membership constituency and address a subject area not within the scope of any existing SIG.

As indicated in Section 8.14 of the ASIS Bylaws, 50 or more regular, individual members of ASIS may submit to the Cabinet Director an application, in writing, for a new SIG. The application must contain:

- Signatures of at least 50 members;
- A list of officers for the proposed SIG;
- An activity plan for the year;
- And a paragraph containing the SIG name, acronym and purpose, including the scope of interest.

All new SIGs must adopt the "Standard Bylaws for SIGs" (Appendix N). The application must also include the proposed operating rules (which are consistent with the Standard Bylaws and the Society's Constitution & Bylaws).

The SIG Cabinet Director will submit the application for a new SIG to the SIG Cabinet for its approval. If approved by the Cabinet, the proposal is then submitted to the ASIS Board of Directors for final approval and the issuance of a charter.

At each stage in the process, the approving authorities (i.e., Cabinet Director, SIG Cabinet and Board of Directors) will judge the application on the basis of its relevance to ASIS interests and needs, uniqueness of the special interest area to be addressed, and the potential ability of the proposed SIG to recruit and maintain an active membership.

Once a SIG's bylaws and operating rules have been approved and the SIG receives its charter, it is important that the operating rules be reviewed periodically by the SIG officers.

Modifying SIGs. The Board approved Standard Bylaws for all SIGs (Appendix N) in 1981 and subsequently revised them in 1987. All SIGs operate under the Standard Bylaws. These bylaws cannot be changed except by vote of the SIG Cabinet, on petition of 10 percent of a particular SIG's membership, or by proposal of a SIG's Executive Committee, the SIG Cabinet, or the ASIS Board of Directors. After the Cabinet has approved a specific change, the amendment must be certified by the ASIS Constitution and Bylaws Committee and approved by the Board.

Proto-SIGs

A proto-SIG may be formed by members who wish to begin limited SIG activities prior to formal establishment of a new SIG (Appendix O). A petition with at least 50 members' signatures must be presented to the SIG Cabinet Steering Committee along with a proposed description of the proto- SIG. While proto-SIGs may perform functions similar to official SIGs, they do have certain limitations to their operations.

A proto-SIG may request funds from the Project and Reserve Fund, produce and distribute newsletters, present programs at national meetings under the rubric of SIG programming and apply for Charter at any time.

A proto-SIG may not vote in SIG Cabinet or collect membership dues.

A proto-SIG may retain its status as a proto-SIG for two Annual Meetings after inception. If, at the end of this period, the group has not been chartered as a full SIG, it shall automatically be dissolved.

Dissolving SIGs

Because information science is a dynamic discipline, areas of subject interest change with time. Hence some new SIGs are created, and others reach the end of their life cycle. While dissolution is a relatively infrequent happening, it is a prospect that is faced by all SIGs.

Recommendations for dissolution can come from the SIG's leadership or membership, from the Board of Directors or from the SIG Cabinet, but the final decision to dissolve a SIG is made by the Board of Directors.

The dissolution of a SIG may be considered for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances: a SIG shows no activity for one or more years; the special interest of the SIG represents a fading interest area; the SIG is unable to retain membership at

minimally acceptable levels; the SIG's efforts are duplicated or closely matched by another SIG; or the SIG poses a financial burden for the Society.

Once a recommendation for dissolution has been made, the SIG Cabinet Director notifies the SIG's officers and members, and then presents the recommendation to the Cabinet. If the Cabinet concurs, the recommendation is submitted to the ASIS Board for its approval. If the Board agrees, the SIG involved is notified of the action and is given a termination date.

SIG Membership Eligibility

All ASIS members are eligible to become members of SIGs, upon payment of the prevailing membership dues. Under no circumstances may non-members of ASIS be members of Special Interest Groups.

ASIS members may join SIGs at any time with payment of full membership dues; however, when SIGs are joined during a member's membership year, the SIG membership terminates concurrently with the individual's regular ASIS membership.

Any ASIS member whose membership has been terminated (such as for non- payment of dues) will be removed from the membership of all SIGs.

B. SIG GOVERNANCE

Governance of ASIS Special Interest Groups and their activities is performed at several levels by different organizational units and sets of officers. While the ASIS Board of Directors retains ultimate authority over the actions of each SIG and all SIGs collectively, the responsibility for oversight is spread among individuals in several units. Those of primary significance are the members of the SIG Cabinet and the elected and appointed officers of each SIG.

SIG Cabinet

The SIG Cabinet is the official coordinating body for all SIGs and their activities. The Cabinet consists of the Cabinet Director, the Deputy Cabinet Director, the SIG Cabinet Steering Committee and one representative from each SIG. As a body, the Cabinet's purpose is to manage the collective affairs of the SIGs and to advise the Board of Directors about the mutual interests and common problems of the SIGs.

The SIG Cabinet Director, who also serves as a member of the ASIS Board of Directors, and

the Deputy Cabinet Director, who serves on the ASIS Board when the Director is absent, are elected by the Cabinet from among the current cabinet representatives and alternate representatives, current Deputy SIG Cabinet Director and any ASIS member who has served as a representative or on the SIG Cabinet Steering Committee during the last three years, and chairs of the various Special Interest Groups. Elections are held every two years in odd-numbered years and there is a limit of two consecutive terms. In addition to representing the interests of the SIGs to the Board, the Cabinet Director must also maintain formal and informal lines of communication with the SIG cabinet and each SIG.

The SIG Cabinet Steering Committee has the general responsibility of assisting the Cabinet Director in the management of the SIG Cabinet. The committee consists of the Cabinet Director, the Deputy Cabinet Director and four other members elected from among the current SIG officers and Cabinet Representatives, each of whom serves a two-year staggered term. One member of the Cabinet Steering Committee is elected in the same year as the Cabinet Director and Deputy Director; the other three members are elected the next year. Members of the Steering Committee are responsible for evaluating and approving all Project and Reserve Fund requests and for serving as liaisons between the SIGs and the Cabinet Director.

The other members of the SIG Cabinet are the Cabinet Representatives elected or appointed by each SIG to represent them in this body. Each SIG must choose a representative and an alternate representative with the expectation that one of them will attend all Cabinet meetings.

The SIG Cabinet generally meets twice a year - at the ASIS Annual Meeting and at the Mid-Year Meeting. Each SIG should ensure that its Cabinet Representative or Alternate Representative attends the meetings. According to SIG Policy, if neither the Representative or Alternate Representative is in attendance, an automatic chain of command for representation takes effect. In the absence of the SIG Cabinet Representative and Alternate, the vote reverts to the Chair, then the Chair-elect, then the Secretary-Treasurer. SIG Chairs may override the sequence by designating in writing the official voting representatives of their choice.

Neither ASIS nor individual SIGs may support the travel expenses of attendees at the SIG Cabinet Meeting. These expenses must be borne by the individuals. An individual need not be a registered attendee at the meeting in order to represent a SIG at a Cabinet meeting.

SIG Officers

Each ASIS SIG is managed by a slate of elected and appointed officers who carry out the plans and projects for the year. By running for office, SIG members make commitments that, if elected, they will perform their responsibilities in an ethical manner and will develop and manage activities that further the goals of the SIG and of ASIS.

In describing the officers of SIGs, the ASIS Bylaws, in Section 8.13, specifically require the selection of two officers: chair, who is the presiding officer and the Cabinet Representative.; and Alternate Cabinet Representative. Each term of office should be consistent with the ASIS administrative year. (The ASIS Administrative Year commences with the adjournment of the meeting of the outgoing Board of Directors following the ASIS Annual Business Meeting.)

In addition, however, the standard bylaws require the election of a chair-elect and the optional election of a secretary or treasurer or secretary/treasurer. The length of the term served by these officers (one or two administrative years) is determined by the SIG's operating rules. The Cabinet Representative and Alternate Representative each serve one administrative year. To determine the requirements of any individual SIG, officers should refer to the SIG's bylaws and operating rules and the ASIS Bylaws, recognizing that the ASIS Bylaws always supersede the SIG bylaws if the two documents are inconsistent.

Though the responsibilities of SIG officers vary slightly from SIG to SIG (as indicated in the SIG's operating rules), as a general rule, the following guidelines apply.

Chair

The SIG chair is the most crucial office within any SIG. The chair generally sets the tone for what the SIG will provide its members during the year of office. It is important that the chair begin the term with an explicit indication of what the SIG is to achieve in the year ahead. The Chair must also assure that all other officers will accomplish their assignments during the year.

Among the chair's specific responsibilities are the following:

- Set the tone for the SIG's activities, providing leadership that assures all SIG members that they will derive benefits from their participation in the SIG. This should include, but not be limited to, regular communication with SIG members through letters, newsletters, phone calls, etc., and substantive program planning (which many SIG chairs choose to delegate to chairs-elect).
- Serve as Cabinet Representative for the SIG
- Submit the Annual Activities Plan to the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters. Within 30 days of taking office, at the beginning of the ASIS Administrative Year, the chair must submit the plan for the year's activities. (The ASIS Administrative Year commences with the adjournment of the meeting of the outgoing Board of Directors following the ASIS Annual Business Meeting..)
- Develop and submit an annual budget in conjunction with the treasurer or secretary/treasurer, if the office exists. This should be developed concurrently with the activity plan, but is due on October 30 or at the end of the Annual

Meeting, whichever is later. Copies should be submitted to the SIG Cabinet Director at Headquarters.

- Manage SIG affairs, including chairing the annual planning meeting and providing accurate minutes of all SIG meetings with copies forwarded to Headquarters and to the SIG Cabinet Director.
 - Appoint chairs and members of SIG committees.

 - Submit the Annual Activities Report to the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters. This report, which doubles as the SIG's nomination package for SIG-of-the-Year honors, should include both qualitative and quantitative information about the SIG's activities during the year, including descriptions of conference sessions, publications, planning meetings, etc. The report, which may be submitted on standard form, must be submitted on or before August 15.

- Serve as chair of the SIG's nominating committee.

Assistant Chair

In some SIGs, a position known as assistant chair has been created to work with the chair in carrying out the SIG's activities. According to ASIS policies, SIGs may include this position in their operating rules if they wish; however, SIGs may not have "co-chairs."

Chair-elect

The chair-elect, who automatically becomes chair in the following year, works closely with the chair in planning and executing SIG programs and serves as the Alternate SIG Cabinet Representative. The chair-elect will assume the duties and responsibilities of the chair in the event of the chair's absence, resignation or removal from office. In most ASIS SIGs, the chair-elect assumes the primary responsibility for planning the SIG's programs during the year, including the technical sessions to be presented at the following Mid-Year and Annual Meetings.

The chair-elect is also responsible for ensuring that the officers roster for the year he/she will serve as chair is sent to the Cabinet Director and Headquarters immediately following elections.

Cabinet Representative

The Cabinet Representative is the SIG's official voice in the SIG Cabinet and, therefore, should

be intimately familiar with the goals and desires of the specific SIG, as well as the overall SIG and ASIS goals. Cabinet representatives must also be willing communicators, since they must report to the SIGs on all matters addressed by the Cabinet. The most effective representatives are often immediate past chairs of SIGs, since these individuals have spent several years working within their chosen SIGs and observing the actions of other SIGs.

The selection rules for Cabinet Representatives vary among SIGs. The representatives are either elected or appointed for varying terms of office, dependent upon the SIG operating rules. Cabinet Representatives may serve in other SIG offices concurrently.

Alternate Cabinet Representative

The Alternate Cabinet Representative serves as representative to the Cabinet in the event of the Cabinet Representative's absence, resignation or removal from office.

Secretary or Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer

These positions are not required by the standard rules and are indicated in the individual operating rules of each SIG. In most SIGs, secretary/treasurer is a combined position elected for a two-year term. As a general rule, the secretary or secretary/treasurer keeps records of all meetings and correspondence to members and assists in making logistical arrangements for SIG meetings and activities. Treasurer or secretary/treasurer must also be aware of Society policies regarding SIG finances and expenses, as this officer, in cooperation with the chair, prepares and submits the SIG's budget and receives the SIG's quarterly financial statements.

Communications Officer

The newsletter editor carries out one of the most important functions of the SIG - communicating with members. The newsletter editor should be in regular contact with the membership to solicit information for the newsletter. The editor should not only be familiar with the subject area but should also understand the procedures and mechanisms of producing and distributing the newsletter with the assistance of Headquarters.

SIG Committees

SIGs should create committees, as needed, to carry out their projects and goals. In addition, all SIGs should have executive committees.

The Executive Committee, which according to the SIG bylaws consists of the SIG officers, should work together to conduct and manage the affairs of the SIG, subject to the SIG Standard Bylaws. The Executive Committee should be empowered to fill vacancies in SIG offices, should they occur, until the next regular election for that office. (An exception, however, is

when an appointment is made to the position of chair-elect; the appointee should not automatically become the chair in the following year. Rather, the position of chair should be elected at the next regular election.)

Nomination and Election of SIG Officers

Nominations

Candidates for SIG officers should be nominated by a standing committee consisting of the SIG chair and two other SIG members appointed by the chair. The committee should prepare the ballot, with at least two nominees for each office to be filled. Nominations from the membership should be encouraged, but must follow the procedures outlined in the SIG's bylaws. Generally, these rules require that names be submitted by petition signed by at least ten members of the SIG and received by the chair at least eight weeks prior to the SIG's annual planning meeting.

In identifying candidates to be included on the ballot, the nominating committee should seek individuals willing to commit their time to providing the necessary leadership for the SIG. All nominees must be members of ASIS and the SIG at the time of their nominations. (ASIS student members are not eligible to hold office.) The best officers are well-versed in the particular interest area of the SIG and also have corporate or organizational support for their professional activities. Individuals without such support find it difficult to attend ASIS and SIG meetings and to prepare correspondence to the membership.

Before the nominating committee completes its ballot, all nominees should confirm their willingness to serve and their ability to perform the functions of the offices for which they are being proposed. Elections. All SIGs should hold their elections at least six weeks prior to the annual SIG planning meetings, which are held in conjunction with the ASIS Annual Meeting. Early elections provide new officers the opportunity to begin generating ideas for the following year and to make necessary plans to assure their attendance at the all-important planning meeting.

SIG Elections

SIG elections should be conducted by mail ballot to all voting members of the SIGs. (Note: Student members of SIGs may vote in SIG elections.) In preparing the ballots, the nominating committee must identify an individual to serve as "teller." This person will receive all ballots from the voting members and will be responsible for counting the votes and reporting the results of the election. The chair of the nominating committee or the SIG secretary could be appointed

teller, provided that the person indicated is not running for office. (Under no circumstances are ballots to be returned to Headquarters.)

Once the deadline date for receipt of ballots has passed, the teller must count the ballots and report the results to the SIG executive committee. New officers should be informed of their election immediately so that they may begin making their plans for office and for attendance at the planning meeting. The ballots should be retained by the teller until after the newly-elected officers have assumed their positions. At that time, provided no official protest of the election has been registered, the ballots may be destroyed.

C. SIG FINANCES

SIG Funding Policies

By authority of the ASIS Board of Directors, SIG activities are financed during the year through budgets held at Headquarters in the name of each SIG. SIG annual budgets, running concurrently with the ASIS fiscal year, are based on the number of members in the SIG as of August 30 of the immediately preceding year, multiplied by \$2 per individual member, plus an allocation from Institutional Membership fees. The budgeted income may be supplemented with other revenue sources, such as workshops and publications, within the restrictions of ASIS policies. (See Appendix B for SIG Funding Policies).

If a SIG wishes to solicit donations, a plan noting the purposes for which and the individuals and companies from which the solicitations are sought must be submitted to the Executive Director for approval in advance. Any funds raised on behalf of the Society are the property of the Society and subject to the standard accounting procedures for the Society. This process will ensure that SIG activities do not conflict with the other priorities of the Society and that fundraising activities can be coordinated and that contributions can be recognized nationally.

At the beginning of each year, all SIGs must submit their budgets for the year's activities. Based on the total income expected for the SIG, activities should be identified and expenses estimated within the total amount of money available for the SIG.

The Board of Directors has instructed that no funds will be released to any SIG until the SIG's financial plan (budget) has been received by the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters. The budget should be submitted by October 30, or at the close of the Annual Meeting, whichever is later. If a SIG does not submit its financial plan within the year, at the end of the year one half of the SIG dues will be returned to the general ASIS fund and the other half will go to the SIG Project and Reserve Fund, up to the Fund's ceiling.

Once a budget has been submitted, each SIG Chair is authorized to approve SIG expenditures each year up to the total of the individual SIG's budgeted funds, except that single expenditures of more than \$200 must be approved by the SIG Cabinet Director.

At the end of each fiscal year, 50 percent of unexpended individual SIG funds will be transferred into the SIG Project and Reserve Fund, up to the fund's ceiling. The remaining funds are retained by the SIG. New SIGs, at the beginning of their first full fiscal year, may retain 100 percent of the remaining funds. A SIG may request carryover its full fund balance to the next fiscal year. The request must be made in writing to the SIG Cabinet Director 30 days prior to the end of the fiscal year and must state the reasons for the carryover. Legitimate reasons for carryover include, among others, severe hardship and completion of a project begun in the previous fiscal year.

SIG Project and Reserve Fund

The SIG Project and Reserve Fund was established by the Board of Directors to assist SIGs that want to undertake worthwhile projects but lack sufficient funds. It also exists as an emergency or loan fund for SIGs that run into financial difficulties. The Fund is administered by the SIG Cabinet Steering Committee. The SIG Cabinet Director regularly reports to the Board of Directors and the SIG Cabinet on each use of the Fund.

Requests for funds for the SIG Project and Reserve Fund may be submitted at any time, but all submissions must follow the approved procedures and guidelines. "General Procedures for Administration of the SIG Project and Reserve Fund" (Appendix C) describes types of requests, application procedures, evaluation process, criteria for project approval, special emergency allocations and administrative reporting. In lieu of the proposal, an official request form may be completed and submitted. A copy of the request form is included in Appendix C. Additional copies are available from the SIG Cabinet Director.

The Project & Reserve Fund never exceeds the Board-mandated ceiling of \$5,000. No new funds will be added to the Project & Reserve Fund until the balance falls below \$5,000. If the balance falls below \$5,000, the Fund is replenished at the end of each year with one-half the unexpended funds from each SIG treasury, unless a SIG requests a specific exception.

Financial Reporting and Responsibilities

Since all SIG accounts are accumulated and held at Headquarters as dedicated and sequestered funds, Headquarters bears the primary responsibility for annual reporting of SIG financial activities. Headquarters routinely handles such matters as the filing of federal tax reports and the compliance with auditor's requests for SIG financial data.

In addition, Headquarters prepares quarterly SIG financial statements which are sent to all SIG chairs and secretary/treasurers or treasurers. The SIG officers are expected to review the statements for accuracy and to assure that sufficient funds exist to cover the anticipated expenses of other projects to be undertaken during the fiscal year. No SIG officer should approve expenditures that exceed the available funds as indicated in the quarterly reports.

Please note that the ASIS fiscal year is October 1 through September 30. All financial reporting is geared to the ASIS fiscal year.

SIG Expenses

While Headquarters bears the primary responsibility for maintaining complete accounts for each SIG, SIG chairs (or secretary/treasurers or treasurers) are responsible for notifying Headquarters of all financial commitments made on behalf of the SIG. When commitments are made, the SIG chair and/or secretary/treasurer or treasurer must send written notification of the expense to Headquarters. Single expenses that exceed \$200 must also be approved by the SIG Cabinet Director. With but one exception, described in the next paragraph, SIGs are not to commit any expenses prior to their submission of annual budgets to Headquarters and to the SIG Cabinet Director. Reports are due by October 30 or at the end of the Annual Meeting, whichever is later. During the first week of October, Headquarters will inform SIGs of the amount of money available to them for the coming year, as determined by the SIG funding policy (Appendix B); the SIGs must indicate how they think they will spend the funds, specifying certain amounts for various line items. The one exception to this rule is in planning expenses for ASIS Annual Meetings.

The ASIS Annual Meeting is always at the beginning of the fiscal year. Therefore, when planning annual meeting activities in the spring and summer of the year, costs incurred will be charged against the next fiscal year's budget. As a general rule, SIGs will not have established their budgets for the coming year at the time they make their Annual Meeting commitments; needless to say, it is important that the officers realistically assess the amount of money they are likely to have in their budgets for the year ahead before making Annual Meeting plans. This pertains specifically to refreshments served at SIG planning meetings, hospitality suites, promotional materials and technical program expenses, including special equipment, speaker travel, etc. Under no circumstances will any Annual Meeting expenses, SIG or otherwise, be charged against the budget of the year ending as the meeting takes place. This is an important point for all SIG officers in planning a year's activities.

As a general rule, SIGs may expend their budgeted funds on any activity or project that is consistent with ASIS policies. Among the items that are usually acceptable uses of SIG funds

are newsletters, certain expenses associated with technical sessions at ASIS meetings;, telephone and postage expenses and promotional activities. Among the items which are not acceptable are travel expenses for any ASIS member for any reason, honoraria for members or non-members or food and lodging expenses for SIG officers or other members of ASIS.

When in doubt about the acceptability of specific expenses, SIG officers should contact the SIG Cabinet Director or a member of the SIG Cabinet Steering Committee for guidance.

Reimbursement to individuals for SIG expenses will be made by Headquarters only after receipt of (1) authorization of the expense from the SIG chair or treasurer or secretary/treasurer (and SIG Cabinet Director, if necessary) and (2) an explicit, detailed invoice from the individual or organization who rendered the service.

Many of the routine administrative tasks of SIGs are performed by ASIS Headquarters at no charge to the SIGs. This includes preparation of financial and membership reports, accounting for SIG dues, maintaining SIG membership lists. In addition, there are no charges to SIGs for minimal assistance in arranging their programs at annual and mid-year meetings, nor are there charges for audiovisual equipment at these meetings, if what the SIG is requesting can be accomplished within the conference AV budget.

In the preparation and production of SIG newsletters and in the preparation for SIG planning meetings, SIGs are charged actual costs incurred and, in some cases, are assessed for staff costs. The following charges can be expected on a regular basis:

SIG Newsletters

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Printing | Charged at Cost | (see Appendix D for estimates) |
| Envelopes | Charged at Cost | |
| Postage | Charged at Cost | |
| Labels/Newsletter | \$10 | |
| Handling/Newsletter | \$30 | |
| SIG Planning Meetings | Charged at cost | (e.g. refreshments) |

Other activities performed by Headquarters at the request of SIGs are considered extraordinary and, in these cases, the SIGs are charged for all costs incurred and for the staff time devoted to the effort. Examples of items considered to be extraordinary include the following:

- Typing the copy or preparing the layout for SIG newsletters
- Special events at Annual and Mid-Year Meetings
- Preparing special promotional mailings for recruitment or other purposes
- All other special projects

When special assessments will be made, beyond those indicated in this manual or specified in other SIG communications, the SIG chair or secretary/treasurer or treasurer will be notified in advance of the expenditure.

D. ADMINISTRATION

The effective administration of Special Interest Groups requires a commitment on the parts of the SIG officers, the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters to perform their administrative and programmatic responsibilities in line with ASIS policies and specific guidelines and policies established for SIGs. To achieve the common goal of serving ASIS members, the relationship requires open communication and timely accomplishment of responsibilities among all parties involved in the process. Included in Appendix A are Key Administrative Dates to which you should refer throughout the year.

SIG Reporting Requirements

SIGs are responsible for the following regular reports:

- Annual SIG Budgets: due to the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters by October 30 or the close of the Annual Meeting, whichever is later.
- Annual Activities Plans: due to the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters 30 days after the Chair takes office. (The ASIS Administrative Year commences with the adjournment of the meeting of the outgoing Board of Directors following the ASIS Annual Meeting.)
- Officers Rosters: due to the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters immediately following elections, or whenever there is a change in officers.
- Annual Activities Reports, which also serve as SIG-of-the-Year submission: due to the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters by August 15.
- Minutes of meetings, any newsletters or ASIS information sent to SIG members without the assistance of Headquarters: send to Headquarters whenever appropriate.

Headquarters Reporting Requirements

ASIS Headquarters provides the SIG the following information on a regular basis:

- Quarterly membership and financial reports in January, May and July.
- Annual closing membership figures and estimated budget figures for next fiscal year during the first week of October.
- Final financial statements during the latter part of the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

Officers Rosters

Up-to-date information on officers is crucial to the successful operation of a SIG. Incoming Chairs are responsible for seeing that this information is always accurate and that rosters are sent to the SIG Cabinet Director and Headquarters immediately following elections. A copy of the SIG Officers Roster form is provided in Appendix E.

Member Records

ASIS maintains an automated member records system that provides mailing labels and printouts of SIG memberships. Each SIG chair automatically receives quarterly membership updates; updates can also be provided (at cost) upon request by a SIG officer.

Through the member records system, Headquarters can generate current and accurate mailing labels for SIG members. Requests for labels should be made using the "Label Request Form" (Appendix F). SIGs must use labels generated by Headquarters for all official SIG membership business (i.e., elections).

Also, please note that SIGs may not make official ASIS membership lists available to outside parties without explicit written permission from the ASIS Executive Director.

SIG Mailings

SIGs are encouraged to communicate with their members by any reasonable means available. Letters and newsletters are usually the most efficient ways of communicating with widely dispersed memberships. SIG mailings are routinely handled by Headquarters, when requested.

Current and accurate membership lists are maintained at Headquarters.

However, SIG officers are free to handle mailings themselves, as long as Headquarters is notified of the plans. Please note, though, that when official SIG business (such as annual elections) is being conducted, mailing labels generated by Headquarters must be used.

Planning/Business Meetings

All SIGs are required to conduct annual planning/business meetings during the ASIS Annual Meeting. These meetings are scheduled by Headquarters, based on preferences provided by each SIG, and do not conflict with technical sessions.

At the planning meeting, the outgoing chair of each SIG presents the annual activities report for the year just ended and the incoming chair reviews plans for the upcoming year and conducts any other SIG business that might be necessary. Among the most critical items for SIG action at the planning meeting is determination of and/or final planning for the technical programs that the SIG will present at the ASIS Mid-Year and Annual Meetings in the year ahead.

SIG planning meetings are to be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, as long as such rules are not inconsistent with ASIS policies. According to ASIS policy, a majority or 10 members of the SIG, whichever is smaller, will constitute a quorum for a SIG planning meeting. Minutes of the meeting are to be prepared and copies must be sent to the SIG Cabinet Director and to Headquarters. It is also customary to publish the minutes in the newsletter.

Business/planning meetings can also be held at other times during the year if petitioned by 20 members of the SIG.

Use of ASIS Logo

SIGs, as official units of ASIS, are both entitled and encouraged to identify themselves with ASIS through the use of the ASIS acronym and logo. However, in order to protect the legal standing of ASIS and the exclusive rights to the acronym, certain guidelines must be followed.

The ASIS acronym in any form (including the logotype version) is a registered service mark of the Society. Essentially this protects the Society from others using the mark "in promoting the interests of information transfer research for scientific, literary and educational purposes." Along with the protection, however, come a number of responsibilities that ASIS must consider at all times. Specifically, the Society can lose its exclusive right to use the mark and/or can be held liable for its misuse if it is improperly used. Therefore, ASIS has a policy that allows

SIGs use of the ASIS service mark within the following guidelines:

1. On the headings of all official newsletters
2. On official stationery
3. On programs for meetings, seminars, etc., which have been properly approved
4. On award certificates that have been properly approved
5. On publicity for all ASIS-recognized/approved functions
6. On technical publications which have been properly approved

As a general rule, "proper approval" requires action by the Board of Directors. In many cases, such as in the production of SIG newsletters and the preparation of awards certificates, blanket approval has been given for the use of the ASIS name and logo, pending review in each case by Headquarters. Such review is routine.

When preparing approved materials on which you plan to use the ASIS logo, please note that the version reproduced here is the only existing ASIS logo. All previous versions and styles should be discarded. Reproducible copies of the logo are available from Headquarters.

Any uses of the name and/or logo that are not mentioned here require specific approval by the Board of Directors. When in doubt, descriptive materials of the intended use of the name should be sent to the Executive Director for review.

SIG Archives

While SIG officers will want to maintain files of recent records and communications concerning the SIG, it is not expected that these files, which will continually expand, will be sent from officer to officer, year after year. At the same time, however, it is desirable that we maintain a written history of each SIG.

Therefore, Headquarters bears the burden of maintaining the archival materials, but must rely on SIGs to provide the pertinent correspondence and other records that help tell the SIGs' stories. Materials deemed to have archival value should be forwarded regularly. Headquarters is not equipped to receive large shipments of old records and materials from every SIG.

SIG Descriptions

Each SIG must have a SIG description and is encouraged to review that description occasionally to determine whether it continues to describe the scope of interest of the SIG. Descriptions can be revised at any time; however, it may take some time before the revision is worked into existing promotional materials. Please note that any revision that implies a change in purpose must be approved by the Cabinet and the Board of Directors.

II. SIG PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

When ASIS members join Special Interest Groups, they do so because they have personal and professional interests in the technical and substantive aspects of the SIG. They pay their money to join the SIG and they look for some benefit in return.

SIGs enjoy a great deal of latitude in planning their activities and determining the types of projects, activities and programs they will conduct. But for all of them, the overriding consideration must be that the members of the group receive value for their membership. All SIGs must be conscientious in their planning and consistent in their implementation of activities.

One of the best ways to keep members interested in the SIG, in addition to providing valuable services, is to involve as many of them as possible in the activities that are planned. As with any organization, SIGs find that a personal appeal to someone who can help provide service is usually the best way to get help.

While SIGs have engaged in numerous different activities and they are encouraged to think creatively when making plans, the most frequent and successful activities are in the areas of broadening the membership involvement, publications, meetings, and continuing education courses.

A. MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

For most SIGs, membership retention is the result of good planning and valuable service to the members. The most successful SIGs are those that provide more activities than just technical programs at the Annual Meeting. Though these programs are important, the reality is that only a small percentage of any SIG's membership actually attends the Annual Meeting. For non-attendees to feel that they have received something for their membership, the SIG must provide additional service.

Involving members in SIG activities is one of the most effective ways to keep the members

interested and to keep the SIG active. Appoint people to committees, choose some to serve on special projects, and ask members to give papers at meetings, organize tutorial/seminar topics, evaluate SIG programs, or prepare newsletter feature articles. All of these projects help put members in the limelight and give them strong encouragement to continue their involvement.

SIGs should also identify people in their areas of interest -- or even in peripheral areas -- who are not currently members of the Society, but who would have something to contribute to and to gain from involvement in the SIG and in ASIS. Some of these people will be known personally to members of the SIGs, and others will be known from their writings in the literature. In their newsletters or special mailings, SIGs could encourage members to identify potential members and either invite them to join or ask the SIG chair to do so.

B. PUBLICATIONS

Newsletters

The most prevalent publication from the ASIS SIGs is the SIG newsletter, which has become the most effective way to communicate with the SIG membership about the interests of the SIGs. All SIGs are encouraged to produce at least two newsletters each year.

The content of SIG newsletters should vary widely, but they should always be written with consideration for the professional interests of the members. While SIG business matters certainly can be discussed in the newsletter, it is best to emphasize substantive issues that help to keep the SIGs visible in the fields they represent.

In addition to the inclusion of such obvious items as reports from the SIG officers, reviews of recent SIG activities and ballots, some of the following ideas should be considered for the newsletter:

Announcements of meetings, workshops and seminars that focus on the specific interests of the SIG, whether sponsored by the SIG or not.

Solicited articles on specific subjects within the field of interest, written by SIG members or others who may have knowledge to contribute

Excerpts from papers delivered at ASIS meetings (be sure that copyright permission is granted)

Descriptions of new technologies, equipment, databases, resources, etc., that pertain to the field

Book reviews and lists of recent publications pertaining to the special interest

Case studies

Reports on current research and development

Questionnaires that might help the SIG and ASIS understand the directions the specific interest area may be heading

SIG newsletters are the most visible evidence of membership value, but they must include valuable information if they are to serve member needs. While the primary responsibility for preparing the newsletter generally falls to the newsletter editor, all SIG officers should assist in planning the issues for the year. Every officer should be able to offer suggestions that will lead to a couple of good articles each year. Then, working with the editor, the officers can find authors, often within the membership, to write them.

While finding the material to include in the SIG newsletter is the most difficult task, the job is only half done at that point. So that the editor's efforts can be focused more carefully on the substantive and content areas of the newsletter, ASIS minimizes the production responsibility as much as possible by placing most of the burden for actual production on Headquarters. ASIS has prepared a common SIG newsletter masthead and simple copy preparation guidelines for editors. If followed, both the time and expense for SIGs is minimized. All SIG officers are encouraged to review the Newsletter Form and Production Guidelines (Appendix G). In addition, budget guidelines and restrictions are listed in Section I, Part C.

In addition to the substantive and business matters that are included in SIG newsletters, all of them must carry the following statement:

The American Society for Information Science assumes no responsibility for statements advanced by contributions to the Society's publications. Editorial views do not necessarily represent the official position of ASIS.

If a SIG chooses to produce and distribute its newsletter without assistance from Headquarters, copies must be sent to Headquarters, SIG Cabinet Director, Deputy Cabinet Director, SIG Cabinet Steering Committee and the ASIS Board of Directors.

Technical Publications

While SIG newsletters are an excellent medium for the dissemination of limited amounts of information to the SIG membership, some SIGs find that they have new or updated substantive information of great interest to a much broader audience. For these publications, SIGs may consider preparing special monographs or books for consideration in the ASIS Monographs

Series, or analysis pieces for quick dissemination by ASIS.

Sources of editorial matter for Technical Publications might be the combined papers of speakers in the SIG technical sessions at an ASIS Annual or Mid-Year Meeting; collected papers by various authors on several aspects of a single topic; or a collaborative effort by several people to write a "how-to" in some specific area of interest.

Any publication under consideration by a SIG must be incorporated into the normal ASIS publication process, but to do so is not difficult. A SIG officer, preferably the chair, should write a brief outline of the proposed publication, including the author(s)' name(s), what is significant about the publication, who is the audience, how long might the publication be, when would it be ready, and other similar pertinent information and send it to the ASIS Monographs Editor, in care of the ASIS Executive Director. The outline will then be reviewed by the editor and the ASIS publisher(s), as well as a peer review group, if appropriate. The SIG will be notified as soon as possible of the reactions of these individuals.

For the protection of the SIGs, as well as of the Society, ASIS owns the copyright on all ASIS publications and must be involved in them. SIGs should not attempt to publish any materials outside the normal process. When in doubt about the process, please contact Headquarters. (See Appendix H for ASIS policies regarding publication of works.)

Other Publication Options

JASIS

The Journal of the American Society for Information Science is the flagship publication of ASIS and one of the leading scholarly journals in the information field. Through contributions to the bi-monthly JASIS, SIGs have the opportunity to address in scholarly detail subjects of interest to their SIGs and are, thus, able to achieve one aspect of the SIG purpose - dissemination of information concerning its special interest. SIG members are encouraged to submit manuscripts to the JASIS editor, whose name and address always appear on the title page of the magazine. All submissions to JASIS are fully refereed. Instructions for contributors are available from the editor.

The Bulletin

Rounding out twelve months of publications, ASIS members also receive the Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science, the ASIS bi-monthly news magazine. The Bulletin approaches information from a different angle -- it contains up-to-date, practical news about information, people in information and ASIS, and short articles on topics of greatest interest to today's information professionals. The Bulletin is an ideal way for SIG members to keep the

rest of ASIS on top of the most significant events in a particular interest area.

SIGs can consider contributing special columns, opinion pieces or longer articles, but must be aware that not all pieces will be accepted for next issue publication. Articles should be no longer than 1500 words and are ideally 750 to 1200 words. Specific contributions and editorial schedules should be discussed with the Bulletin Editor at ASIS Headquarters.

C. MEETINGS

SIGs are in many ways the representation of the substance of ASIS; they are the embodiment of the specific interests of the whole of ASIS and can attract leading experts in a particular field. As a Society, ASIS looks to its SIGs as a source of information and knowledge, and uses that resource in a variety of ways. One of the more important ways to share this expertise is through technical meetings, not only the regularly scheduled Society-wide meetings, but also through special, focused meetings and seminars.

ASIS Annual Meetings

Among the many contributions that SIGs can make to their members and to ASIS, the most important are often the technical programs presented at Annual Meetings. SIG technical sessions have taken many different formats: the traditional platform presentation with three or four speakers, a formal lecture followed by a panel discussion, tutorials, workshops, debates, demonstrations, rap sessions.

As with other aspects of SIG management, SIGs enjoy significant freedom in planning their technical sessions for the Annual Meeting. The expectation from the ASIS Board and the Conference Planning Committees is that each SIG will present one or more state-of-the-art presentations focusing on the specific interest of the SIG and providing needed information to the SIG membership, as well as the ASIS membership and the professional information community-at-large.

While there are no arbitrary limits on the number of sessions that a SIG may propose for an Annual Meeting, SIGs are encouraged to do fewer sessions in a superior way, rather than more sessions that do not meet the audience expectations. The best SIGs are those that do the best job - quality rather than quantity. SIGs are also encouraged to work together in planning jointly-sponsored technical sessions. Quite frequently, the interests of two or more SIGs overlap and, by combining program plans, a far better program session may result.

Because the SIG technical programs are such an important aspect of the Annual Meetings, SIGs are asked to begin planning future sessions up to two years in advance. Having good program ideas in mind before the planning deadlines are announced by the conference committee makes

it much easier to firm up plans and to secure the commitments of the best speakers.

Ideally, each SIG will appoint a technical program coordinator 18-24 months prior to the meeting for which the planning will be done. This individual will serve as the liaison between the SIG and the conference committee in selecting and confirming program sessions and between the SIG and the speakers in making all necessary arrangements for the presentations. This person should also work with other SIGs in the planning of co-sponsored or cooperative sessions.

ASIS has adopted guidelines for SIG participation in Annual Meetings that establish the basic relationship between the SIGs and the conference committees. Essentially, the guidelines reaffirm the lack of arbitrary limits on the number of sessions SIGs can offer at meetings, but they also note that the conference committee can establish both quality standards and submission deadlines that SIGs must meet for their programs to be accepted. These guidelines (Appendix I) should be reviewed by all SIG officers and program planners. In addition, officers and planners should be aware of the budget guidelines and restrictions that are listed in Appendix J.

ASIS Mid-Year and Other Meetings

SIGs will continue to be encouraged to participate in ASIS Mid-Year Meetings. However, these meetings will generally be focused on narrow topics and themes and will require thematically appropriate sessions from SIGs. More often than not, all SIGs, particularly if they work cooperatively with other SIGs, will be able to plan programs that focus on their specific areas of interest, but tie into the overall meeting theme.

In addition, SIGs should consider topics for which they might have special expertise in planning a complete one-to-three day seminar or workshop for co-sponsorship by the SIG and ASIS. As a rule, such plans should be presented to the Executive Director while in a preliminary stage of consideration, but they should be explicit enough that a reasonable assessment of the potential market can be made.

SIG Meetings

SIGs may also consider planning their own meetings during the year, but they are cautioned about the complexities of meeting planning. More often than not, it is to the SIG's advantage to focus its energies on the technical aspects of the meeting, and request co-sponsorship from ASIS to handle the logistical elements. Cooperative meetings with ASIS chapters provide an excellent opportunity for ASIS members in a local area. Generally, the local arrangements are handled by the chapter, and the technical presentations are the responsibility of the SIG.

As a general rule, SIG meetings must be supported by SIG funds and they should not be scheduled within a period of three weeks before or after an ASIS-sponsored meeting.

SIG Co-sponsorship with Other Organizations

SIGs are encouraged to co-operate with other professional societies and/or educational institutions in considering ideas for joint meetings. In many cases, Board approval is required, so planning should begin early and the Executive Director should be kept informed.

When a SIG co-sponsors a meeting with another organization, it is important that the sponsorship status be clearly indicated and that ASIS not be indicated as a sponsor unless specific approval has been given. And, as with SIG meetings, co-sponsored meetings should not be scheduled within a period of three weeks before or after an ASIS-sponsored meeting.

D. CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

SIGs are also encouraged to assist in the planning and development of continuing education programs directed at meeting the professional needs of their constituencies. Since SIG officers and members are knowledgeable in specific fields of interest, they may be called on by the ASIS Education Committee to help identify the leading professionals in particular fields and to recommend individuals to lead a seminars or teach courses.

In addition SIGs can initiate the development of continuing education courses. If SIG members perceive a need in a particular area, they are encouraged to explore and develop the idea, outline the course and identify potential markets. This outline can be submitted to Headquarters and the Education Committee with an indication of all costs, including the extent of ASIS involvement in development costs. Proposal and budget guidelines and timelines are available from ASIS Headquarters.

The incentive for a SIG to sponsor a continuing education course is that it can help meet the needs of the SIG's constituency and broaden the SIG's potential membership base by promoting and publicizing SIG activities to a larger group of people. In addition, the financial incentive should not be overlooked; a well thought out and publicized program that meets the needs of a clearly-defined group should provide extra income to the SIG, since the SIG shares in the profit from any course it sponsors. SIGs can also subsidize course fees for SIG members, thereby providing yet another tangible benefit to the SIG membership. Guidelines for SIG participation in Continuing Education courses are provided in Appendix K.

E. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Although ASIS is limited by its Constitution and Bylaws and by its status as a non-profit educational (501(c)(3)) organization, occasionally it is appropriate for ASIS to comment on the activities of both local and national policy-making bodies. SIGs are encouraged to assist in the formulation of comments that ASIS presents in the public arena.

From time to time, ASIS will request input from the membership on particular issues. As a center for expertise in a particular subject area, a SIG is often the ideal forum within ASIS to formulate responses. SIG members should also be aware of issues and concerns to the Society as a whole, and be prepared to initiate the process of public comment through the appropriate channels. All public comment should be made through the Public Affairs Committee and the Executive Director.

F. SIG-OF-THE-YEAR

Now that your SIG is on its way to a year of strong programs, frequent communications and creative planning, it's time to start thinking about the SIG-of-the-Year Award. Each year since 1976, ASIS has honored the SIG whose professional accomplishments have made the greatest impact on the field of information science.

If you haven't already appointed a member of your SIG to begin compiling a record of the year's accomplishments, now is the time to do so. Ask this person to keep a file of everything that your SIG does, including newsletters, directories, articles, program sessions, participation in other meetings, etc. Be sure to provide the person with the SIG-of-the-Year Award guidelines (Appendix L) and the Nominating Package Form (Appendix M). Then continue your planning for your best year yet.

SIG OFFICERS MANUAL

8720 Georgia Ave. Suite 501
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301 495-0900
asis@asis.org

(Revised 12/1998; 1992; 1994)