

Internet Society Elections Committee 2018/2019 Final Report to the Board of Trustees

The Elections Committee is happy to present its final report to the Board of Trustees.

For the 2019 the Internet Society Board of Trustees elections there were two trustees elected by the Internet Society Organization Members and one by the Internet Society Chapters. The Organization Members slate had four candidates for the election and the Chapters slate had three candidates for the election.

Further, one trustee was selected by the IAB (Internet Architecture Board) for the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) by a separate process.

The 2018/2019 Elections Committee comprised of six members, namely Walid Al-Saqaf (chairman), Hans Peter Dittler, Sean Turner and Andrew Sullivan (ex-officio) from the ISOC Board, in addition to Ted Hardie and Sivasubramanian Muthusamy who were recommended by the Organization Member Advisory Council and Chapter Advisory Council respectively.

Nominations opened on October 26, 2018, and closed on December 14, 2018 as planned. Following the nominations process, the candidate slates comprising **Tejpal Bedi, Mike Godwin, Harish Pillay** and **Mieke van Heesewijk** for the Organization Members and **Olga Cavalli, Susannah Gray** and **Chester Soong** for the Chapters, were announced on February 1, 2019. The list of candidates was then confirmed on February 25, 2019 as per established timeline.

As in past years, a short biography of each candidate was posted on the Internet Society website at: <https://www.internetsociety.org/board-of-trustees/elections/2019/nominees/>.

To encourage easier and open communications between the candidates and the constituents, two mailing lists were created, one for the Organization Members and another for Chapters. We received the assistance of ISOC Staff to populate the mailing lists with the email IDs of the respective candidates and constituents.

The initial discussions on the mailing lists were kicked off on March 1, 2019 with four questions posted by the Election Committee Chair, who invited all candidates to answer and engage with the community. The welcome message sent out included information on how to unsubscribe if the mailing list participants so desired. In total, there were 60 messages posted on the two mailing lists: 35 on the Chapter Forum and 25 on the Organization Member Forum.

While the activity on the mailing lists was generally well within the norms of an informed and engaging discussions, there was one message sent to the Chapter Forum that triggered one of the Election Committee members to ask the Committee's Chair to intervene if, in his opinion, it qualified as "bullying". Upon examining the message, the Chair did intervene by referring to ISOC's *Procedures for Selecting Trustees*, which provides general guidelines regarding the conduct of candidates and calling for abiding by them and encouraging all

members of the mailing list to *"maintain civility in their discussions."* There were no further retaliations or incidents following this intervention.

ISOC Staff sent out the ballots to eligible voters and we did encounter some invalid email IDs, but they were quickly fixed. Both the ISOC Staff and the Chair reached out directly to those organizations and Chapters to get the voting individuals properly identified and entered into our elections system.

It is noteworthy however that an email of one particular voter seemed to consistently failed to receive the voting ballot from the BigPulse service, indicating possible firewall or spam-related restrictions. To solve this problem, the support team requested that the voter provide an alternative email address and had to send the ballot link to it upon getting permission from the Chair as the guidelines stipulate. The voter eventually succeeded to vote.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the ISOC Staff, particularly the IT support team for ensuring that the voting process ran smoothly with voting closed on April 8, 2019 at 15:00 UTC. The President received no appeals during the challenge period, leading to the finalization and announcement of the election results on April 25, 2019.

Trustee election results

Chapters

Olga Cavalli won the trustee election for Chapters with 58 out of 100 ballots cast. Each Chapter had one ballot to cast and there were 116 eligible voting Chapters. The voter turnout was therefore 86.21% in this year's election.

Organization Members

In the Organization Members election, **Mieke van Heesewijk** got 55.34% of the weighted vote (and 56.92% of the individual votes) and **Mike Godwin** received 40.78% of the weighted vote (and 41.54% of the individual votes). Each Organization Member could cast two votes and each of the votes had a weight of between 1 and 6 based on the membership category. In this election, 65 out of 105 Organization Members voted, representing a turnout of 61.9%.

The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF)

Following the process documented in RFC 3677, the IAB selected and the IESG confirmed **Richard Barnes** to serve as Internet Society trustee.

Term of Office

The term of office for all four of the Trustees will be three years, commencing with the Internet Society's Annual General Meeting in July 2019.

Voting Statistics 2015–2019

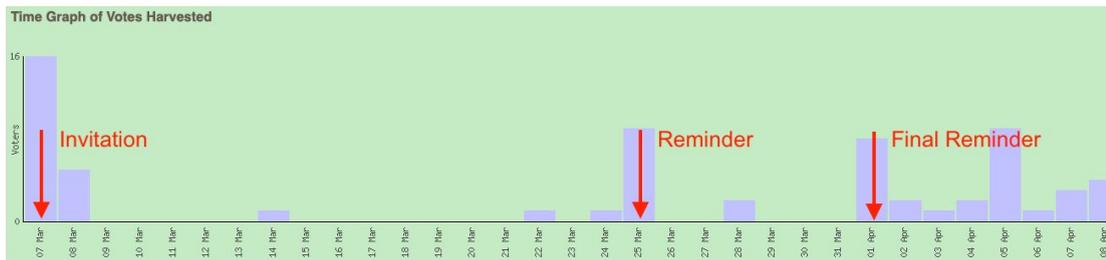
The results of election participation over the last five years are as follows:

- **2019:** 100 out of 116 Chapters (86.21%) voted. 65 out of 105 Organization Members (61.9%) voted.
- **2018:** 91 out of 122 Chapters (74.59%) voted. 68 out of 122 Organization Members (55.74%) voted.
- **2017:** 89 out of 119 Chapters (74.79%) voted. 75 out of 111 Organization Members (67.57%) voted.
- **2016:** 79 out of 114 Chapters (69%) voted. 75 out of 132 Organization Members (57%) voted.
- **2015:** 88 out of 105 Chapters (84%) voted. 74 out of 119 Organization Members (62%) voted.

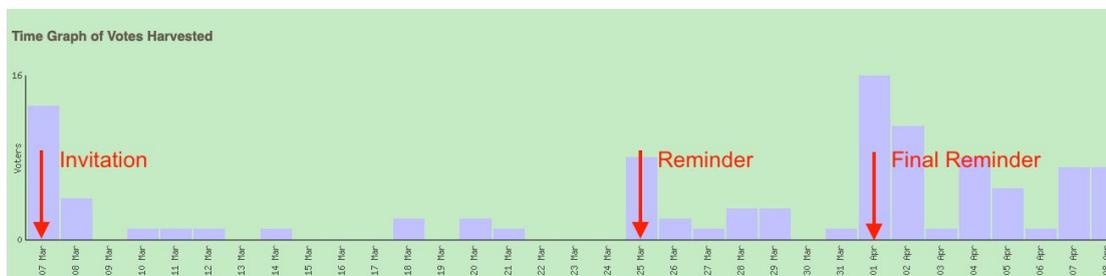
Turnout for organization members was higher this year reaching 61.9% (65 out of 105). It was also very high for Chapters, reaching 86.21% (100 out of 116), which is a new record since 2013.

Based on ballot casting metrics data obtained from IT support, it was found that reminders sent throughout the voting period did make a difference as demonstrated in the below charts:

Chapter election:



Organization member elections:



This high turnout is a positive sign and would not have happened without the considerable effort made by Elections Committee and the ISOC staff, who have provided prompt and effective support throughout the election period.

In terms of abstentions, there were 2 from Chapters and 4 from Organization Members. Those figures are quite acceptable and do not constitute a concern to the election since they are a right for all voters.

Post-election survey

On April 15, 2019, the Elections Committee sent out an anonymous survey seeking feedback on the nominations and elections process. Separate surveys were sent to Chapters and Organization Members and to those that voted and those that did not. The aim was to have those that did not vote state possible reasons for not voting and get feedback on the elections process from those that did vote.

Out of the 220 voting delegates that were sent the anonymous survey, only 26 responded, which is a low turnout (less than 12%). The turnout was higher among Chapters that voted as 19 out of 100 filled the survey (19%). Among the 65 Organization Members that voted, only 9 responded to the survey (less than 14%). However, only one of those Organization Members that did not vote filled the survey while none of those Chapters that did not vote filled the survey. This signaled some consistent lack of responsiveness and communication at their end.

The survey results showed that most respondents were satisfied with the transparency, clarity, inclusiveness and overall quality of the nominations and elections processes. While some respondents provided a range of differing views on how to improve the processes mainly by changing the period for casting ballots and/or number of times to change votes. However, those calling for changes to one extreme were roughly equal in number to those arguing for the other extreme. The majority, however, seem to be satisfied with the status quo.

Recommendations

In order to further improve the Board of Trustees election process we recommend that the 2019/2020 Elections Committee consider the following for possible incorporation into the elections process:

1. Divide the month allocated for voting into two weeks exclusively for the Candidates Forum, followed by a gap of two days and then followed by two weeks for voting. It appears that the fact that there is an overlap between the Candidate Forum and the voting process makes some voters forced to wait to learn more about the candidates and not vote right at the start of the period. We see that two weeks for Forum discussions and two weeks for voting are flexible enough for an effective election process. If this recommendation is accepted, it will also be necessary for the Board to make a change to the *Procedures for Selecting Trustees* so that the clause "A minimum of 28 days will be allowed for the receipt of ballots." is changed to "A minimum of 14 days will be allowed for the receipt of ballots." We recommend that the next Election Committee implement this as an experiment and then re-evaluate afterwards.
2. Contact Chapters and Organization Members that did not vote in the previous elections to encourage them to participate in the new elections. This should have been followed by ISOC Staff's own follow-up to inquire about the reasons that prevented them from voting.

3. Have the Elections Committee Chair send an email early in the process to the Organization Member voting delegates to underscore the value and need for members to participate in the elections.
4. Ensure that reminders (sent in the middle and the day before the deadline) and any emails encouraging voting delegates to vote are only sent by the Elections Committee (and not the ISOC staff) and be sent only to those that did not vote yet and not to the general mailing lists or to anyone other from the voting delegates.
5. Emphasize in the reminders that only one designated person in each Chapter and Organization Member may vote and eliminate any confusion among members on this point.
6. Approach the IT team and if necessary, the BigPulse company to request adding a warning after the first ballot is cast that the voter has only one chance to change the vote. Similarly, when voting for the second change, the voter needs to be shown a message clearly explaining that the ballot will be final and can never be changed.
7. Contact BigPulse in advance of the elections to give them a heads-up on the possible technical issues that may happen between them and the voters (when the ballot/email is not received).
8. Include a question in the first email announcing the Candidate Forum asking candidates to explain how they would conduct themselves as board members and how they understand the role of a board member. Those basic questions are meant to give clues as to whether the candidate genuinely understands his/her role as a trustee.
9. Adopt a communications plan that uses more accurate terminology when referring to voting reminders so that the term "final reminder" is only used once and at the last opportunity to vote..
10. Have the Elections Committee Chair require that external members of the Committee comply with the ISOC Conflict of Interest Policy and complete the related Disclosure Form.

Finally, we take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude and regards to all the ISOC Staff involved in the elections process (BigPulse voting system, Internet Society website and mailing lists) for their tremendous support throughout the election period.

In particular, special thanks go to Board Liaison Kevin Craemer for the splendid support he has provided to the Elections Committee and its Chair.

On behalf of the 2018/2019 Elections Committee,

Walid Al-Saqaf
Chairman of the Elections Committee