Annual Report 2009
ARLIS/NA Membership Committee

Submitted by: Shalimar Fojas White (shalimar.white@artstor.org; tel. 212-500-2404)

Membership Committee for 2009-2010
Chair: Shalimar Fojas White
Committee Members: Laurel Bliss, Caroline Culbert, Jamie Lausch, Bryan Loar, Jill Luedke, Ian McDermott, Eva Revitt
Board Liaison: Kim Collins

Membership Committee for 2010-2011
Chair: Bryan Loar
Committee Members: Laurel Bliss, Caroline Culbert, Jamie Lausch, Jill Luedke, Ian McDermott, Eva Revitt, 2 TBAs
Board Liaison: Kim Collins

I. Membership Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Category</th>
<th>Current 2010 Members (as of 4/22/10)</th>
<th>Baseline 2009 Members (as of 6/30/09)</th>
<th>Current 2010 Members as Percentage of 2009 Baseline</th>
<th>2010 New Members</th>
<th>2009 Non-renewals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Unemployed</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>128%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>111%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>141%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorary</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Individuals</strong></td>
<td><strong>900</strong></td>
<td><strong>864</strong></td>
<td><strong>104.17%</strong></td>
<td><strong>232</strong></td>
<td><strong>223</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Affiliate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL MEMBERS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1099</strong></td>
<td><strong>1098</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.09%</strong></td>
<td><strong>254</strong></td>
<td><strong>289</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the membership numbers as of April 22, 2010. The total number of members (1099) is slightly higher than last year, when compared to the baseline for 2009 membership numbers (1098), as of June 30, 2009. Renewals have brought the 2010 membership numbers to 100% of the 2009 levels.
The total number of members for 2010 (1099) is within the range of totals from previous years: 1098 in 2009, 1105 in 2008, 1047 in 2007, 1139 in 2006, 1131 in 2005, 1179 in 2004, and 1025 in 2003. Given the increase in membership dues introduced during the 2009 renewals cycle and the current economic downturn, 2010 renewals have been remarkably resilient. All of the individual levels of membership are at least 90% of their 2009 levels, with Student, Introductory, and Retired/Unemployed displaying marked growth. Indeed, Individual memberships are at 104% of their 2009 level. The number of Institutional memberships remained fairly steady, but there were considerable net losses in two other segments, Business Affiliate and Overseas. As will be discussed in a subsequent section, the Membership Committee recommends that these group membership categories be reviewed.

It should be noted that new memberships (254) have offset the effect of non-renewals (289) to some extent. In particular, the number of 2010 new student memberships (124) has more than replaced the loss of 2009 non-renewing students (103). This follows the same pattern as last year, where Student memberships accounted for approximately half of all new memberships, representing a key population to target in order to maintain and grow the Society membership. The Introductory membership also continues to attract new members to ARLIS/NA.

II. Committee Activities

During the Membership Committee meeting at the 2009 annual conference in Indianapolis, the ARLIS/NA Association & Conference Manager met with committee members and outlined the transition of management companies from McPherson Clarke to Technical Enterprises (TEI). She indicated that the ARLIS/NA website and membership directory would be transitioned from the current MemberClicks system to TEI’s database, which is proprietary software, on May 12, 2009. In the ensuing year, a majority of the committee’s activities involved working with TEI to prepare for and implement this transition.

1) Membership Forms

In early May 2009, committee members reviewed the existing membership forms, both online and print versions, and provided TEI with suggested edits and revisions. The Membership Committee chair worked with TEI staff to review iterative versions of the forms and check them for accuracy.

The revised PDF version of the membership form went live on the ARLIS/NA web site in June 2009. The Membership Committee alerted TEI to issues with the initial build, such as links being mis-directed, which were subsequently resolved.

Testing of the online version of the membership form began in July 2009. Committee members participated in several rounds of testing and verification before the forms finally went live in late October 2009. The main issues related to increasing the character limits in certain fields and the notification system for members expressing interest in a chapter, committee, special interest group, etc. It took TEI several weeks to implement the necessary changes to the form. There were additional rounds of testing in late September and October, during which the Membership Committee provided additional detailed feedback. Much of this work occurred in tandem with the development and review of the online directory, which is further described below.

2) Online Directory
In August 2009, TEI informed the Membership Committee that development was underway on the online directory, which would replace the existing MemberClicks database. Committee members were invited to test the member search function and the member profile update form. The Membership Committee provided TEI with comments and text revisions.

The main problems were similar to those delaying the membership form, namely character limits in certain fields and the notification system for members expressing interest in a chapter, committee, special interest group, etc. For this notification system, when members indicated an interest in a chapter or other group, an automatic email message would be sent to the corresponding chair. To implement this, current lists of chapter, section, division, special interest group, and committee chairs and moderators were compiled with the assistance of the ARLIS/NA Vice President. To resolve issues regarding the chapter interest notifications, the Membership Committee chair also participated in a conference call with TEI staff and the Chapters Liaison. After several rounds of testing, all of the web forms were reviewed and approved for release by the Membership Committee. The forms went live in late October and ARLIS/NA’s subscription to MemberClicks officially discontinued.

After the release, members reported additional problems with the notification systems. Since members’ selections were not saving properly in some cases, chairs of various groups were being inundated with interest notifications as members attempted to submit their membership forms repeatedly. TEI eventually implemented a fix for this issue.

Members also reported issues with the fact that their billing address that was displaying in the member search, rather than their mailing address. Others noticed the low number of records appearing in the online directory. TEI noted that members have an option for whether they would like to be listed in the Handbook and Member Directory, which was controlled by the same Yes/No checkbox. Many members had not indicated their preference, so that these records were suppressed from the search results. The Membership Committee recommended that only those members who had affirmatively indicated “No” should not be displayed in the directory. TEI made this change as well as the one to display the mailing address in the member profile. Then, the Membership Committee drafted a message to the membership to explain these changes, as well as a recent outage of service to the members-only area. The message also stated that only active members who have indicated that they want to be listed in the Handbook and Member Directory would be findable in the online directory. This message was posted to ARLIS-L on November 25, 2009.

In December 2009, several members reported that institutional affiliations were not displaying in the search results for the online directory. Also, street addresses were displaying twice in some cases. The Membership Committee chair brought this issue to TEI, who noted that most members indicated their affiliation in their billing address, but not their mailing address, which is what was now displayed in the directory. The committee chair advocated that institutional affiliation should be tracked independent of type of address, since it is something that remains constant like one’s title, regardless of where one prefers to receive publications from the Society. In addition, institutional affiliation is one of the more important pieces of information that the online directory can provide to a member searching for colleagues. TEI eventually made this change to the database.

3) Renewals Notifications

Beginning in June 2009, the Membership Committee began to review the automatic email messages that would be sent to members during the Fall renewals cycle. TEI drafted
messages, which committee members edited and revised. The following messages were developed according a schedule whereby the renewals process starts 90 days before the expiration date (December 31st) and renewal reminders are sent at 90, 60, and 30 days prior. After the expiration date, there is a grace period of 60 days with additional reminders sent at 30 and 60 days.

1. **Welcome email**
   
   *Sent to new members upon receipt of online or print membership application form*

2. **Thank you for Renewing email**
   
   *Sent to renewing members upon receipt of online or print membership renewal form*

3. **It’s time to renew email**
   
   *Sent to current members 90, 60, and 30 days from expiration date*

4. **It’s time to renew – final reminder**
   
   *Sent to current members 1 day from expiration date*

5. **We are going to miss you email**
   
   *Sent to non-renewals at 30 and 60 days after expiration date*

6. **We miss you email**
   
   *Sent to non-renewals at 75 and 90 days after expiration date*

7. **Thank you for your payment email**
   
   *Sent to new and renewing members when they pay online*

8. **Have you paid your invoice email**
   
   *Sent to new and renewing members who submit online form, indicate that they will pay by check, but payment has not been received within 30 days*

9. **Information Needed email**
   
   *Sent to current members at 120 days from expiration date*

Due to the delays involved with implementing the web forms discussed above, the first renewal reminders did not go out until early November 2009 (approximately 60 days out from the expiration date). Committee members noticed formatting issues and typos, which TEI eventually fixed. Additionally, several Board members had problems renewing due to issues with credit card transactions not being processed and their selections for chapters, committees, etc. not saving.

During this time, the Membership Committee drafted a message to the membership for ARLIS-L, which outlined the process for renewing online through the new TEI system. The message also mentioned that dues and conference registration fees had not increased for members, despite the economic climate. The message was reviewed by the ARLIS/NA President before being posted to ARLIS-L on November 11, 2009. In light of problems reported by members with the online directory, a follow-up message was posted on November 25, 2009 (described above).

4) **Additional Renewals Activities**

**Honorary Members**

After the ARLIS-L post and initial renewal reminder were sent out, the Membership Committee chair was contacted by honorary members inquiring about the renewal process for their lifetime memberships. They reported having had repeated problems renewing their memberships each year. This issue was brought to TEI, who implemented a change whereby the expiration date for honorary members was set far into the future, so that they would not need to be manually renewed every year. To notify honorary members of this change, the Membership Committee drafted a message that thanked them for their service to ARLIS/NA and encouraged them to keep their member profiles up-to-date in the new TEI
system. The Membership Committee recommended that this message be sent to the honorary members annually, in lieu of the renewal reminders, so that they would know that no action would be required on their part to continue their lifetime memberships. The only elements that TEI would need to update are the current year and signature of the ARLIS/NA President. The message was sent via email by TEI on December 2, 2009.

Invoices for renewals

TEI notified the Membership Committee chair that hard copy invoices would be sent to Individual, Institutional, Business Affiliate, and Overseas non-renewals in early December. The chair reviewed the paper invoice and approved the mailing for TEI.

Outreach to 2007 and 2008 non-renewals

Last year, the Membership Committee supplemented the automatic renewal reminders with targeted messaging to specific groups of non-renewals. The Membership Committee chair requested updated membership reports from TEI and used their spreadsheets to compile contact information for the mailings. This year, the following groups received personalized email messages generated from TEI’s data: 2008 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/2008) and 2007 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/2007). The text of the email message was based on the draft developed by committee members last year. It encouraged the member to renew for 2010 and included brief questions for those who would not be renewing, which were designed to ascertain why they did not do so and what the Society could do to better serve member needs in the future.

This email campaign was undertaken at the end of December 2009. For 2008 non-renewals, 257 emails were sent; for 2007 non-renewals, 184 emails were sent. Out of 441 emails sent, 95 came back as undeliverable. Given last year’s experience, the higher rate of undeliverable messages for 2007 non-renewals, as well as bounce-backs indicating that contacts were no longer at certain institutions, was expected. Many expired members lacked email addresses in their online profiles, or existing emails were not current in their profiles. Nevertheless, 17 people did respond directly to the renewal reminder – 6 reported that they had already renewed, 3 said that they may renew this year, and 8 indicated that they will definitely not renew. Most non-renewing members cited financial concerns as the main reason for not renewing. Members who did reply indicated their appreciation of the personal contact. It also provided the Membership Committee an opportunity to thank members personally for their support of the Society, regardless of their plans to renew their memberships for 2010. It is hoped that this personal contact reminded members that the Society values their support and will welcome their renewal in the future.

Outreach to 2009 non-renewals

The Membership Committee also drafted a message to the membership to encourage them to take advantage of the discount offered to members who registered for the annual conference before March 19, 2009. The message was posted to ARLIS-L on March 5, 2009 to reach members before the early-bird registration deadline. The post reminded members whose memberships had expired that their accounts were now inactive and they could not renew online. It outlined the steps they could follow to renew by phone and then register for the conference by email or fax. This workflow was the one recommended by TEI for expired members, since the ARLIS/NA Membership Department needed to alert the Customer Care Department that payment was pending, so that the conference registrations could be processed at the member rate. This suggested procedure resulted in quite a few member queries received by committee members, which are described below. These issues were
compounded by problems with the online registration forms, which made conference registration problematic for many members.

To reach as many individual members as possible before the early-bird registration deadline, the Membership Committee used the same strategy to reach 2009 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/2009) that was used to contact 2007 and 2009 non-renewals in the December 2009 mailing. The Membership Committee sent a version of the text used in the ARLIS-L post and sent personalized emails to reach 278 inactive members. 34 came back as undeliverable and 8 members replied directly.

General comments about the 2010 renewals cycle

As with the December mailing, quite a few members indicated that by the time they had received the personalized email, they had already renewed their membership. This created some confusion on the member’s part and necessitated the Membership Chair emailing TEI to confirm that a member’s account was indeed active. This is due to the fact that the membership reports provided by TEI do not always reflect the most current status of members, particularly since they are not considered active until payment is processed. As there is some lag time between receipt and processing of payment, the membership lists provided are not always up-to-date. Also, the Membership Committee chair must request each report individually from TEI, which are usually provided at the beginning of the month (reflecting the previous month’s renewals). Sometimes, delivery of these reports is delayed due to the workload on ARLIS/NA Membership Department staff. Unfortunately, mailings that use even slightly outdated information run the risk of unnecessarily contacting already active members in good standing. This does not reflect positively on the Society, since it seems to indicate a lack of coordination.

The Membership Committee recommends that TEI deliver membership reports to the chair on a regular monthly basis, so that membership numbers can be monitored accurately. Also, the chair should be given access to the backend of the membership database, so that the chair can generate up-to-date lists whenever a mailing is planned. Such access would also allow the chair to execute routine verifications of a members’ status without emailing back and forth with the ARLIS/NA Membership Department.

5) Member Queries

The Membership Committee regularly responds to queries from members about benefits, renewal procedures, and membership status. Committee members are able to respond to some of these inquires, such as explaining member benefits or instructing members on how to renew their memberships. Last year, the committee chair was granted Board-level access to the MemberClicks online directory. As a result, simple queries about membership status (e.g. whether an account active vs. expired) were also fielded by the committee. This year, with the transition to TEI, the committee chair lost access to the membership database since the TEI system is proprietary software. Information about membership status must be gleaned from the membership reports that the chair requests from TEI on a monthly basis. Or, the Membership Committee chair will forward queries to the ARLIS/NA Membership Department directly for confirmation or resolution.

In some cases, the member has reached out to a committee member after an already unsuccessful attempt to contact the ARLIS/NA Membership or Customer Care Departments. The bulk of the queries occurred after mailings executed by the Membership Committee, which relied on outdated membership information provided in TEI’s reports. As discussed in the section above, due to time lags in the receipt and processing of payments, members
who had already renewed continued to receive renewal reminders. This caused both confusion and frustration, which might have been mitigated with more timely reporting and immediate access to the membership database to ascertain a member’s status. As it is, the committee member must forward the query to the ARLIS/NA Membership Department, who must email back a confirmation, and then the committee member must follow up with the member or else transfer the interaction to TEI for full resolution. This results in many inefficiencies and personal frustrations that do not reflect well on the Society.

The second main source of queries was the renewal process after the end of the grace period. Online renewal was no longer an option 60 days after December 31, 2009. Unfortunately, the deactivation of expired accounts occurred before the end of early bird conference registration. As noted above, the Membership Committee prepared multiple communications that encouraged members to renew their memberships before March 19, 2010 in order to take advantage of the reduced conference registration rate offered to members. From past experience, the Membership Committee recognizes that a large number of members decide to renew at the same time that they decide whether or not to attend the annual conference. Many prefer to both renew and register at the same time and to complete both transactions simultaneously or in close sequence. But, due to some initial problems with the conference registration form, many members were unable to do accomplish either of these tasks online. TEI recommended that members either print the membership form and fax/mail it in with payment, or renew their memberships over the phone. Unfortunately, these methods take time and members must wait until their membership payments are processed before they can register for the conference online. This is not an ideal situation. The Membership Committee recommends that the grace period for membership expiration be extended at least until after the early-bird conference registration deadline, or ideally, to 90 days after the December 31st expiration date. This would alleviate a lot of the problems reported by members who were unable to renew memberships quickly, so as to register for the conference online.

6) Membership Brochure

Revising the membership brochure has been a goal of the Membership Committee for some time, but the lack of support from McPherson Clarke made this task unachievable in previous years. The Board confirmed that the $1,750 had been allocated to redesign and print a new brochure could be carried over into 2009. The Membership Committee developed draft text for the brochure. In March 2009, the committee shared the draft, along with recommendations for layout, with the Board and TEI via a Google doc. The Canadian Member-at-Large provided a French translator; the Association & Conference Manager arranged for a Spanish translation of the text. The committee members also identified three members willing to include quotations and photographs in the brochure. They contacted these members personally and also developed forms to permit ARLIS/NA to use both the text and images. These permissions were secured and passed along to TEI. As of this report, TEI indicates that the brochure is in the final stages of design and that a proof would be ready soon. It was hoped that the brochure would be ready in time for the conference, but the Membership Committee is pleased that this long-standing goal has been nearly completed.

7) 2010 Conference Activities

The Membership Committee will hold its business meeting at the 38th annual conference on April 24, 2009 from 5:00 – 6:00 PM. In addition, committee will reprise the ARLIS/NA Membership Information table, which has been included in the past two conferences.
Committee members will oversee the table and provide members with information about the Society and how to participate in its activities.

8) ARLIS/NA Website

The Membership Committee maintains a page on the ARLIS/NA website: http://www.arlisna.org/organization/com/membership/index.html. It lists the committee’s members, mission, annual reports, conference meeting minutes, and guidelines for the “What Our Members Are Saying...” section. Additionally, the committee works with ARLIS/NA HQ to update the “Join ARLIS/NA” page (http://www.arlisna.org/join.html) with current renewal instructions and forms.

The “What Our Members Are Saying...” section of the ARLIS/NA website featured individual members: http://www.arlisna.org/saying.html. These features were the source of the quotations used in the revised membership brochure.

IV. Review of 2008-2010 Goals

Goal III: To be an advocate for our members, the profession, and ARLIS/NA.

Objective C. Craft and administer effective recruitment and retention strategies to attract and maintain new members.

Actions:

- Revise membership brochure. Nearly done. The committee delivered text and photographs of quoted members to TEI in March. TEI reports that the brochure is in the final stages of design and will be produced soon. Once brochure is completed, committee may move ahead with the goals listed under Objective D.

- Contact new members. Done. New members receive Welcome messages via TEI’s member database.

- Contact non-renewals. Done. In December 2009, the committee contacted 2007 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/07) and 2008 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/08). In March 2010, the committee sent an email reminder to 2009 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/09).

Objective D. Provide proactive outreach to library schools to diversify our membership and the profession.

Actions:

- Improve marketing of benefits. Pending. The group developed project plans to create a “media kit,” which will include a standardized PowerPoint introducing ARLIS/NA and listing member benefits, as well as a PDF version of the revised membership brochure. This outreach package can be distributed to chapters, or used by individual committee members for local outreach to library schools. This project is dependent on the completion of the revised membership brochure (see above).

- Work with local ARLIS/NA chapters.
Pending. Last year, the committee determined geographic assignments among members to establish a structure whereby individual members will serve as liaisons to chapters for outreach. The committee also planned to distribute a “media kit” (see above) to chapter chairs, who would be encouraged to adapt the package for presentation at local library schools. These initiatives are dependent on the revision of the membership brochure (see above).

- Identify which GSLIS programs currently have courses in art/visual resources librarianship and/or have a student interest group for art/visual resources enthusiasts. Pending. In 2008, committee members researched GSLIS programs and contacts. Need to send updated marketing materials, including revised membership brochure and “media kit” (both pending).

- Contact GSLIS programs and request that they include links to the ARLIS/NA website and local chapter site on their web sites. Partially complete – needs follow up. In 2008, committee members contacted GSLIS programs and received positive responses. Need to follow up to check web sites and confirm that links were added.

- Pursue outreach to other graduate programs, such as art history or studio art, to introduce art librarianship as an alternative career path. Pending. Need to complete revision of membership brochure and conduct research to identify appropriate programs and contacts.

- Begin discussion with Development and Travel Awards Committees to pursue funding to encourage membership growth, and to identify additional funding sources for new members. Pending. Preliminary discussions with chair of Development Committee, but needs to be pursued more.

- Work with ArLiSNAP and the Diversity Committee to promote membership, help foster membership retention, and provide leadership training for the Society. Perennial, need to do more.

**Goal IV: To strengthen and increase the effectiveness of ARLIS/NA’s activities and operations.**

**Objective A. Conduct regular assessment of ARLIS/NA’s programs to inform future strategic planning.**

Action:

- Investigate the feasibility of a comments/suggestions page on the website which would be monitored regularly or other options for members to offer feedback to the Society. Pending.

**Objective B. Provide an efficient and effective organizational and financial structure to ensure the stability and health of the Society.**

Actions:
• Communicate the activities of the Committee to the members of ARLIS/NA in an effort to increase transparency and promote a better understanding of the operations of the Society.  
Active pursued. Committee communicated regularly with membership via ARLIS-L and email campaigns. Efforts need to be increased.

Objective C. Enhance the ARLIS/NA website by populating it with relevant content to create the premiere website for art library professionals.

Actions:

• Provide input into the development and maintenance TEI’s online directory. Investigate how the committee can take advantage of the software.  
Active pursued. The committee feedback as TEI developed the online forms and member directory. Need to provide additional feedback on how to improve and expand the functionality.

• Continue “What our members are saying…” section of website.  
Need to reactivate this feature.

• Create ARLIS/NA-hosted Membership Committee website to make available information and resources relevant to the committee.  
Done, but needs to be developed more. Committee would like to provide members with access to standardized marketing materials, which can be used for informational or recruitment purposes. In addition to the new member Welcome packet materials, the committee would also like to post the revised membership brochure and “media kit.”

V. Executive Board issues

The Executive Board asked the Membership Committee to make a recommendation for what the Society should do with regard to the Institutional, Business Affiliate, and Overseas membership categories. The Board also requested an analysis of the Society’s current calendar year renewals and whether ARLIS/NA would be better served with an alternative system. Finally, the Membership Committee would like to offer recommendations for improving the renewals process in the coming year. The Membership Committee’s analysis and recommendations are listed below.

1) Reassessing Membership Categories

To assess effectiveness of current membership types, examining the renewal rates per type would be one indicator of what ARLIS/NA members themselves view as effective. In 2010, the Institutional category held steady at 96% of 2009 levels. However, the Business Affiliate and Overseas categories are at 64% and 52% of 2009 levels, respectively. There is very little growth in all three categories, in terms of new memberships for 2010. Other factors to consider consider:

Institutional and Business Affiliate categories

• Associations that offer institutional or company memberships typically have higher renewal rates (Nicolais, p. 80) because in these cases the institution or employer may pay for membership and therefore increase chances of renewing.

• The Institutional category may be a valuable membership segment for vendors who rent the ARLIS/NA members list.
Why is there a distinction made between Institutional and Business Affiliate members? The membership fees and benefits are identical and the explanation of the difference is rather convoluted (From the ARLIS/NA web site: “Institutional membership class is limited to not-for-profit library, educational, cultural, and research institutions within Continental North America only (Canada, Mexico, and the United States only). Business affiliate class is for all for-profit associations located globally and not-for-profit institutions outside Continental North America.” [http://www.arlisna.org/join.html#benefits]).

Since there is no functional difference between the two, ARLIS/NA should consider merging these categories, since other membership categories do not make a distinction between the profit or non-profit status of the individual’s institutional affiliation.

Merging the categories has the added benefit of simplifying the member database and communications about membership categories and benefits, which are necessarily verbose and complicated at present.

Other than the label what are the advantages of being an Institutional/Business Affiliate member? Currently, the only additional benefit is a discount on JOBNET postings and an extra listing in the Handbook and Member Directory.

Suggestions for additional benefits to attract new memberships include:
- Allowing an institutional membership to be represented by more than one individual.
- Offering institutional memberships akin to the College Art Association where an institutional membership enables up to 10 employees conference registration at the member rate. This structure would likely raise the Institutional rate, but would offer more for the money.

Overseas category

In reviewing the list of Overseas members, most are the Serials or Journals department within academic institutions or commercial organizations. It seems clear that the primary benefit for these members is the Art Documentation subscription.

Other than the label Overseas is there any service that ARLIS/NA currently offers that targets this membership segment? For example, is there anything that we do or could do to make international members feel welcomed at an ARLIS/NA conference? It would be useful to know from TEI what the conference attendance rate has been for members in the category. Also, if they are coming to the conference, they must find value in the ARLIS/NA membership as an individual, in which case, perhaps they would opt for the Individual membership to participate fully in the Society.

The plans to move Art Documentation fully online may take 3 years or more. Once it does move online, will there be an Art Doc-only subscription or will ARLIS/NA require institutions to pay the full membership fee to get Art Doc?

Currently the Overseas membership is less expensive, $102 versus $120 for Individual membership. The fee also includes $17 First Class Mail fee, so the base membership fee is actually cheaper at $85. Will it continue to be less expensive if Art Doc is available as full-text online for all members?

The Overseas category may be a valuable membership segment for vendors who rent ARLIS/NA members list. However, this value may be minimal as the numbers are small and trending downward.

Perhaps ARLIS/NA should eliminate the Overseas category and create an Art Doc-only subscription.
- International organizations that primarily want the Art Doc subscription and no additional benefits can pay $102 ($85 for the subscription and $17 for postage).
- International individuals who value their memberships will be encouraged to join as Individual members who can enjoy the full benefits.
Moving forward, when Art Doc moves online, international organizations who wish to continue their subscription can move to an e-only subscription and pay $85 initially, without postage. This gives ARLIS/NA room to increase subscription fees more regularly over time, as other periodicals do.

2) Reassessing the Renewals System

Currently, ARLIS/NA membership is based on the calendar year, which expires for all ARLIS/NA members on December 31st. This following analysis presents the pros and cons for this calendar year system and also provides an alternative, anniversary or rolling renewals.

Calendar Renewals – based on a fiscal or calendar year

**PROS**
- Depending on the size of the organization, an argument can be made that they are easier to manage.
- If major announcements, such as communication of new benefits or association news, are timed prior to renewal date, they can be a catalyst for renewals.
- Discounts for early renewals (should a decision be made to go with this incentive) are potentially easier to manage.

**CONS**
- Sudden influx of money (feast or famine scenario).
- Delayed membership projections. Ideally members should renew prior to membership expiration on December 31st. But in reality, many do not renew till weeks or months after the current expiration date. Therefore, it is impossible to get a sense of renewal numbers until February and into March after the early bird conference registration deadline.
- Sudden increase in workload to manage renewals all at once.
- Very late renewals can complicate individual member’s ability to register for the annual conference. However, as mentioned above, increasing the current grace period for expired accounts from 60 to 90 days may address the issue.
- Members belonging to numerous professional organizations are likely faced with the financial expense of renewing all memberships at once. For the less committed, an ARLIS/NA membership is at a higher risk of not being renewed.

Anniversary or Rolling Renewals – based on the date an individual joined the organization

**PROS**
- More even cash flow - anniversary renewals allow an organization to spread income throughout the year.
- The Society will have a sense of renewal rates throughout the year and can adjust budget and renewal campaign in a more timely manner. For example, snapshots of retention rates can be calculated on a monthly basis.
- Renewal workload and effort is spread throughout the year.
- More fiscally fair to member, presently ARLIS does not have a prorated membership rate for new members who join mid-year.
- More time to focus on new members, data shows that new members are at highest risk of not renewing. Because renewal workload is spread throughout the year, staff can
more readily target advocacy and marketing efforts to this particular membership
segment.

CONS
• More confusing for individual members - most will not remember when their renewal is
due.
• Depending on size of organization and management software capabilities, can be more
complex to manage.

General recommendations

ARLIS/NA and TEI will have to assess whether moving to an anniversary or rolling renewals
process will be feasible, given the investment of time and resources over the past year to
develop the infrastructure to support calendar renewals. Given that the 2010 renewals cycle
was delayed due to the development of the current online forms, a realistic timeline for
development should be projected before restructuring the existing systems.

If ARLIS/NA continues with calendar renewals perhaps we should consider the two following
options:
1. Incentivize renewals by offering discounted membership rates for those who
renew early (up to 30 days prior to deadline)
2. Offer pro-rated membership rates for those who join ARLIS/NA mid-year.

Bibliography


McDermott, Michael and Arlene Farber Sirkin. Keeping Members: CEO Strategies for 21st

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3) Recommendations for the Renewals Process

The focus of the committee’s activities this year was working with TEI to prepare for and
implement the transition from MemberClicks to TEI’s membership database and web forms.
The development of these forms delayed the beginning of the renewals process, truncating
the amount of time that the committee had to focus on increased outreach efforts and other
projects. The revision of the membership brochure, on which other goals are dependent,
was accomplished to the extent that TEI is now producing the brochure. In working with TEI
over the course of the year, the Membership Committee notes the increased responsiveness
as compared to the previous management company. Though much improved, the
infrastructure for managing Society memberships can be improved and the Membership
Committee would like to work with TEI to address the following issues in 2010-2011:

• Online directory and membership form
  It is hard to compare our directory to other organizations as one often needs to be a
member to access this information. Where publicly available, a comparison was
conducted between the ARLIS/NA directory and that of other library organizations. The
Educause directory is exemplary (http://www.educause.edu/memdir). It is organized by
institution, which then lists affiliated individuals. Educause only has institutional
memberships but the structure and design of the directory is easy to navigate; it also allows users to sort by geographic region. A recommendation is made that ARLIS/NA adopts a similarly flexible online model for its directory. Now that the TEI member directory is operational, the Membership Committee would like to work with TEI to improve the system, since there was a significant loss of functionality in the transition from MemberClicks.

The membership form does not incorporate best-in-class user interface principles. The information is presented in a long, jumbled, hard-to-digest format. Instead, the interface should be clean and broken into smaller, more easily digestible snippets. For example, explanations or descriptions can many times be hidden and then revealed when needed by the user. Furthermore, the form does not provide an aspirational experience -- instead it is base and transactional. A good case study to emulate is MoMA (http://www.moma.org/support/membership/join). On the backend, the membership form should be used to generate a great deal of statistical data, e.g. member profile by region, professional practice, tenure. The relevance of collecting this data should be considered and membership form adjusted accordingly.

- **Member inquiries**
  As noted above, committee members regularly forward member inquiries to TEI. While responsiveness has increased significantly, the level of service provided in terms of response time and simplification of the renewal process can be improved.

- **Schedule for renewal reminders**
  The 2010 renewals cycle was greatly improved by TEI’s efforts to automate the renewal reminders according to the 90, 60, and 30 day benchmarks both before and after the membership expiration date (December 31st). Unfortunately, development of the web forms delayed the first renewal communications by a month. Also, the Membership Committee recommends that the grace period be extended to 90 days after the expiration date, to avoid all the issues encountered by members attempting to renew membership by the early-bird conference registration deadline.

- **Reporting**
  In the past, the Membership Committee chair had Board-level access to the MemberClicks directory and was able to generate regular reports, which were useful for tracking membership numbers during the renewals process. This year, the committee chair has had to rely on reports requested from TEI, which are delivered on a monthly basis. This process does not allow for generating statistics in a timely manner, for example to generate member mailings or snapshots of renewals for Board meetings. Also, comparisons of 2010 renewals to 2009 numbers were generated by the Membership Committee chair by referring to statistics exported from MemberClicks the previous year. The chair would not have been able to provide the Board with this analysis without the old data, which was personally archived. The lack of a regular reporting schedule does not provide the Society with standardized statistics that can be archived for future analysis or benchmarking. Furthermore, without access to create ad hoc reports, the Membership Committee finds it difficult to address its needs as well as the Board’s needs.

- **Membership web pages**
  The ARLIS/NA’s membership Web pages are verbose and poorly structured. The "Member Benefits" and "What Your Membership Includes" sections are redundant. In particular, the benefits section should be condensed, and both sections should be combined. As currently written, the benefits section does not clearly state how
members get involved in our groups (e.g. who initiates communication) and the organization of benefits is not compelling. Additionally, unlike the various committees and task forces offered by ALA, ACRL, etc., some of our groups are by invitation only. A good case study for how this information should be structured is the Smithsonian Institution: http://www.smithsoniansociety.org/jss_membership_levels.html. The Membership Committee would like to work with TEI to restructure these pages.