

MOTION: That CNCA establish a standing committee on technology.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION: Our primary purpose as alcoholics in AA is to help the alcoholic who is still suffering; General Service, and our work in the Area, aims to make service work that helps facilitate 12th Step work possible. The intent of this motion is to better serve those who participate in General Service work and allow them to be most effective.

The rate at which technology is growing and expanding surpasses the rate at which AA can keep up and, as it stands, is too much work for the Web committee to take on. Up until now, the Web committee (formed initially to work only on the Area website) has taken on many technology responsibilities, despite not having a mandate to do so.

Having a standing committee on technology would allow elected members to bridge this gap and keep our Area and our officers trained and up to date on how technology is being used. Every two years, officers pass off their information to the next elected member and there are a plethora of data sharing platforms one could use and information that is not stored is lost. A Technology committee could be responsible for choosing which platforms best suit our needs so there is a smoother transition for each pass-it-on and we can make sure information is not lost.

The method of communication between committee officers can be inconsistent and undocumented, from texting to emailing to phone calls. Technology exists that could help save these communications and archive them. If this motion passes, a standing committee could be responsible for the following needed responsibilities (and could possibly need more resources): provide workshops on technology; focus on a uniform platform for officers to communicate committee business; choose a cloud-based file storage system for use by the Area; build and maintain databases (for the Registrar and Treasurer); and assist the Districts with information and file sharing.

Although the intent of this motion is to serve the Area Officers directly, the sharing of knowledge effectively through technology has the potential to help out local recovery meetings. What we learn and share here at Area becomes our knowledge to share with our fellow alcoholic groups.

It seems incredibly important that General Service, and AA as a whole, does not fall behind on the steep learning curve that is modern technology. We must strive to fill the gap in knowledge of technology that already exists as well. There are many ways we could be using technology that is already freely available to better serve ourselves and others. Let us not lose any more time discussing amongst ourselves the best way to communicate and save our data, and instead, let us assign a committee to specifically do the research and work for us.

- Nick S., GSR, District 08

ARGUMENT AGAINST THE MOTION: While the idea of creating a technology committee seems like a good one at first, this motion – as it stands now – is unclear as far as scope and tasks. After reviewing the background available on this motion (including in the technology ad hoc final report from last year), there appears to be no real need for a Technology committee, as this would be a duplication of the Web committee, which already performs many of these tasks. There would be other ways to help guide the area through technology policy and oversight.

Standing committees help the Area do its business – but creating a committee just because it “might” be helpful seems unnecessary, particularly considering the ill-defined scope and lack of clear purpose to the current proposal. Bill always wrote that good is the enemy of the best; this motion seems good, but is it the best we can do?

Because the motion is unclear, it is not possible to decide if this would be a good use of the groups' contributions to the Area. Groups contribute to the Area because they want us to help facilitate the Twelfth Step message. It is unclear what purpose this committee would serve. Because the Web Committee is already performing the work that this committee would be doing, I do not believe that this is a good use of area funds. Creating a new committee for something that is not needed and which is being effectively done by our current Web committee is not the most useful way to use group contributions.

Is there an expressed need for this committee? What would this committee do? What kind of costs would be associated with this service? Until these questions can be answered I would strongly argue against this motion.

- Megan Q., GSR/Registrar, District 15