Post Conference Wrap-up

2013 Conference Evaluation Report
to the NASIG Executive Board
Art & Information, Architecture & Knowledge
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Submitted by
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NASIG’s 28th annual conference was held in Buffalo,
New York. The conference featured four pre-
conferences, three vision sessions, thirty program
sessions, and seventeen sessions in the new “Great
Ideas Showcase” (formally poster sessions). Other
events included a first timers/mentoring reception,
informal discussion groups, a vendor expo, a dessert
reception with live Jazz music, and an evening event at
the Buffalo Transportation Pierce Arrow Museum.

This year, 285 of the 417 conference attendees
completed all or part of the online evaluation form. This
68% response rate reflects an increase of 10% from last
year’s rate of 58%. This was the seventh year that the
evaluation form was available online. Those who
completed the online evaluation were eligible to enter a
drawing for a $50 Amazon gift card. The winner will be
announced in the NASIG Newsletter.

Below is a summary of the evaluation results.

CONFERENCE RATING

Overall Conference Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4.39</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>4.25</td>
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4.25 4.39 4.31 2.00 3.00 4.00 5.00

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Respondents were asked to give ratings on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest rating. The overall rating for the 2013 conference was 4.31. This is lower than the overall rating for the 2012 conference, but higher than the rating for the 2011 conference, which was 4.39 and 4.25 respectively.

Facilities and Local Arrangements

Ratings for the facilities and local arrangements at this year’s conference varied from last year’s with some ratings being higher while others were lower. While the breaks and meals were rated higher than both the last two conferences, the ratings for hotel rooms, meeting rooms, geographic location, and social events were all lower than the 2012 ratings. Geographic location dropped for the second year in a row with an overall average rating of 3.72, down from 3.89 for Nashville, TN (2012 conference) and 4.24 for St. Louis, MO (2011 conference). A look at the comments revealed concerns about nighttime safety and difficulty getting to Buffalo from places other than the East Coast. One responder wrote that while Buffalo turned out to be more interesting than expected, NASIG might attract more conference attendees with more appealing locations. The biggest drop among the facility ratings was for the meeting rooms. Reasons were squeaky uncomfortable chairs, temperature issues (rooms too cold), and a lack of tables and Wi-Fi in the rooms. Better room signage or a map of the facility was a suggested improvement. Some commented that the exhibition center was too far a walk and that it had bad acoustics.
On a positive note, breaks and meals rated higher in 2013 than both 2012 and 2011. The breakfasts enjoyed many positive comments, as did the hotel staff. While the hotel room rating decreased from 4.36 in 2012 to 4.27 in 2013, the 2013 rating was still quite a bit higher than the 2011 rating of 4.07. Social events also rated lower than last year with 4.35 as compared to 4.42, but slightly higher than the year before. Dine-arounds were generally positively received, although a couple of survey responders commented that they would have preferred more cultural social events such as organized or guided tours. The dessert reception enjoyed numerous positive reviews. The reception at the Pierce Arrow Museum received mixed reviews with many commenting that they enjoyed the museum itself as well as the speaker, but found the food to be less appealing.

Online Conference Information

The conference web site rating was virtually unchanged in 2013 (4.13) as compared to 2012 (4.14), although the conference blog rating dropped slightly from 3.79 in 2012 to 3.73 in 2013. The majority of the responses indicated that people generally did not follow the blog. Some responders did not know there was a conference blog. The phone app for smartphones was positively received as was the daily email update function.

Survey results showed that 71.7% of the 2013 conference attendees who completed the survey brought a laptop or tablet to the conference. The 2013 evaluation survey was the first to include “tablet” in this question. In prior years, the survey asked only whether attendees brought a laptop with them. In 2012, 56.4% indicated they brought a laptop with them, slightly up from the 53.8% who indicated they had a laptop at the 2011 conference. It is hard to know the extent to which the jump from 56.4% in 2012 to 71.7% in 2013 is due to the addition of “tablet” in the question. What is known is that a large number of NASIG conference attendees bring either laptops or tablets with them.

This year’s evaluation also asked responders to rate the necessity for wireless access in meeting rooms. Whenever possible, NASIG negotiates for wireless
access in meeting rooms, but in some locations it is quite expensive. In Buffalo, there was wireless access in the hotel rooms, but not in the meeting rooms. The average rating for wireless access in meeting rooms was 3.87. Comments indicated a mix of opinions ranging from absolute necessity of wireless access in meeting rooms to it being unnecessary as long as there is wireless in the hotel rooms (for checking email and the like). Some noted that taking notes during sessions is possible without wireless capability; others were disappointed that they were not able to use social media such as Twitter during sessions. Although not directly related to the question, several respondents suggested more tables and outlets in meeting rooms for easier use of laptops and tablets.

NASIG again used the online store Café Press for conference souvenirs. While most respondents (71.9%) did not visit the store, 25.6% did like the selection of items. Some commenters questioned the necessity of this online store, some mentioned poor quality although good customer service (poor quality items were replaced for free), and others noted an interest in general NASIG items not related to any particular year or conference.

PROGRAM

Respondents were asked about the balance in the types of programs offered. This year’s overall rating was 4.15, down from last year’s rating of 4.21, but up from the 2011 rating of 3.97. Comments were generally positive about the variety of topics. Several commented on the high quality of this year’s keynote addresses. Some respondents felt there were too many sessions aimed at beginners and one commenter would have preferred more programs on RDA outside of the pre-conferences, which come at an additional cost.

Respondents were asked if the layout and explanation of program choices were easy to understand. This year’s rating was 4.09; down from both last year’s rating of 4.38 and the 2011 rating of 4.12. Comments indicated a frustration with the condensed printout, which excluded information about the Great Ideas Showcase and the informal discussion groups. One commenter happily used the web program, but was unable to expand to view the session descriptions due to lack of wireless access in the meeting rooms. A few respondents bemoaned the lack of a map of the meeting rooms or better signage, and some felt that the session titles or short descriptions did not adequately represent the programs.

Respondents were also asked about the overall design of the conference schedule. They were given three topics to rate. The first concerned the time for breaks. Most people felt that the time allotted for breaks was just right; giving this a rating of 4.42, up from 4.18 in 2012. Next respondents were asked about the length of the sessions. This rated 4.47, virtually unchanged from 2012’s 4.46 rating, and an indication that responders overwhelmingly felt the length of the sessions was appropriate. Despite the high rating, a few comments noted that some sessions ended early (30 minutes) while other sessions, particularly those with multiple presenters, needed more than one hour. Lastly, respondents were asked about the pace of the conference as a whole. Responders rated this positively at 4.45, down only slightly from 4.47 in 2012.
In 2012 the session organization was changed, replacing strategy and tactics sessions with general one hour long program sessions. For this reason, there is no 2012 or 2013 data for strategy or tactics sessions, and no 2011 data for program sessions.
This year the conference featured three vision sessions: Libraries and Mobile Technologies in the Age of the Visible College by Bryan Alexander (4.27), The Value of Serials in Academic and Special Libraries by Megan Oakleaf (4.60), and Googlization and the Challenge of Big Data by Siva Vaidhyanathan (4.47). The average rating for these sessions was 4.45, which is lower than last year’s rating of 4.54 but higher than 2011’s rating of 4.07. Despite the drop in the overall rating, comments throughout the survey indicate positive reactions to the vision sessions of the 2013 conference.

There were a total of thirty program sessions in the 2013 NASIG Annual Conference. Ratings varied from 3.43 to 4.61 with the average being 4.09. This is a slightly lower average rating than last year’s 4.13. The 2013 session with the highest score (4.61) was Textbook Affordability: Is there a Role for the Library? by Dean Hendrix and Charles Lyon.

Poster sessions were replaced by the Great Ideas Showcase in 2013 and included significantly more exhibitors than in the past. In 2012 there were six poster sessions; in 2013 there were seventeen presenters in the Great Ideas Showcase. Ratings ranged from 3.42 to 4.36 with an average overall rating of 3.99. This is a drop from the last two years. However, the slight format change and the increase in number of exhibitors may have had an effect on the average. The highest Great Ideas Showcase rating (4.36) went to Round ERM Up: Corralling E-Resources Using Google Sites by Rosemarie Reynolds.

In replacing the Poster Sessions, the Great Ideas Showcase sought to provide an opportunity for participants to share innovative ideas in a wider variety of ways (posters, laptops, tablets, e-readers) at tables that allowed attendees to mingle. In order to gauge the success of this change, survey questions were added to rate the Great Ideas Showcase and ask whether conference attendees would like NASIG to continue this. The average rating for the Great Ideas Showcase was 3.90 with 75.2% of respondents stating that they would like to see this continue in the future. Comments indicated that the space was cramped, making it difficult for more than one or two people to see the session, and that in situations where presenters had only a laptop or tablet, it would be better to also include a poster or some sort of signage that would allow others to see the topic from behind the crowd. A few respondents were unclear about what the Great Ideas Showcase was and one was upset because this was not in the printed program and he/she therefore missed it. Two comments suggested that this would be better placed in the time slot directly after a lunch break.

There were four pre-conferences featured this year with ratings varying from 4.83 to 5.0, with an average of 4.89. This rating is quite a bit higher than in the last two years with the 2012 average being 4.5 and the 2011 average being 4.07. The session entitled Copyright in Practice: a Participatory Workshop by Kevin Smith received a perfect 5.0 score.
The 2013 NASIG Conference offered fifteen informal discussion groups, up from nine during the 2012 conference and 14 in 2011. The ratings for the informal discussion groups ranged from 1 (lowest possible rating) to 5 (highest possible rating). The average rating was 4.12, a decrease from last year’s 4.32 but an increase from the 2011 rating of 3.98. The first-timers/mentoring reception rated a 4.18, a significant dip from last year’s 4.46 and even lower than 2011’s rating of 4.30. Despite this, 89% of respondents favored the continuation of this event in the future. The business meeting also dipped to 3.88 from last year’s 4.02, but was slightly higher than the 2011 rating of 3.86. The vendor expo rating increased for the second year in a row with a 2013 rating of 4.08 as compared to 3.99 and 3.91 for 2012 and 2011 respectively. Responders liked the fact that the expo was together with the reception. 89% of respondents agreed that the vendor expo should continue in the future.
Academic library employees continue to represent the largest group of respondents (76%). This includes university, college, and community college librarians. Responses from the vendor and publisher community, including subscription agents, publishers, database providers, automated systems vendors, and book vendors comprised 10% of the total respondents. This was lower than in 2012 and 2011, which were 11% and 13% respectively. Attendees from specialized libraries including medical, law, and special or corporate libraries made up 8% of respondents, which is lower than last year’s 9%, but higher than 2011’s 6%. Government, national and state libraries represented only 4% of the respondents. The remaining 3% of respondents included public libraries, library network, consortium, or utility, and those selecting ‘other’.

Respondents were asked to describe their work, selecting more than one category as applicable. The largest respondent groups identified themselves as serials librarians (41.3%), followed by electronic resources librarians (39.6%), catalog/metadata librarians (26.1%), and acquisitions librarians (24.7%). Licensing rights managers comprised 15.2% of respondents, collection development librarians 14.5%, and technical service managers also 14.5%. Paraprofessionals comprised 10.6% of the respondents. All other categories were selected by less than 10% of respondents.
When asked for the amount of serials-related experience, the majority of respondents were in the category of more than 20 years (29%) or 11-20 years (24%). Those with 10 or fewer years of experience comprised 47% of respondents, (see chart above for exact breakdown).

Respondents by Number of NASIG Conferences Attended
There were many new attendees this year, with 33% of respondents indicating that this was their first NASIG annual conference. 31% of respondents had attended 1-5 previous conferences, 17% had attended 6-10, 8% had attended 11-15, 6% had attended 16-20, and 5% had attended more than 20 NASIG conferences.