

4.1.1.1 Short Title: Worldcon Publications

Moved, To amend Article 1, Subsection 1.5.3, by ~~striking out~~ and adding words to allow committees to not include paper versions of their generally-distributed publications (progress reports and program/souvenir book) in their memberships, but to provide them at a reasonable cost (in addition to the basic non-paper-publications membership) to those members who request them:

1.5.3: ~~Electronic distribution of publications, if offered, shall be opt in. Memberships need not include paper copies of any generally distributed publications; however, the convention must make paper copies of such publications available to members at a reasonable price not to significantly exceed the production and shipping cost of such publications.~~

Proposed by: Lisa Hayes

Seconded by: Kevin Standlee, Susan de Guardiola, Thomas Stidman, R-Laurraine Tutihasi, Tero Ykspetäjä, Jo Rhett, Kevin Roche, Adrienne Foster, Andy Trembley, Ron Oakes

Commentary: “Generally distributed publications” (see WSFS Constitution section 1.5.2) are not directly defined, but have been generally accepted to mean the convention’s progress reports and program/souvenir book, but not more limited items such as Guest of Honor books, tote bags, or other merchandise. Such publications have traditionally been printed on paper and either mailed or given to members. There are other non-print objects (for example, CD-ROMs) that conventions have given to their members, and also conventions have to a greater or lesser extent attempted to accommodate members with disabilities; however, as these subjects are not addressed by the current WSFS Constitution, this amendment also does not address them.

Currently, Worldcons must include the cost of printing and distributing paper publications in their membership prices, because the existing wording of section 1.5.3 requires that paper publications be provided unless the member opts out of receiving them. An increasingly large number of members have been opting out of such publications in recent years, to the point where it is now possible that we have reached a “tipping point” where requiring paper publications in a membership is adding unnecessary and unwanted costs to such memberships.

This proposal would repeal the requirement that paper versions of publications such as progress reports and the program/souvenir book(s) be factored into the cost of a supporting or attending membership. Committees may choose to continue to include such publications in their memberships, but would not be required to do so. In other words, this proposal would not *force* committees to remove paper publications from their basic memberships, but would *allow* them to do so.

Recognizing that the paper versions of publications continue to be an important element of a membership to a significant number of members, this proposal would

require that conventions provide paper copies of their generally-distributed publications to those members who request them. However, this proposal would also require that the amounts charged for such publications are reasonable and do not significantly exceed the cost of producing and distributing those publications.

The intent of this motion is not to require that an exact amount be charged (for example, \$2.18 printing plus \$1.16 postage for a single progress report), but that the convention could charge a simple round amount (in this example, \$4) that was not significantly more than the cost attributable to producing and distributing the item. Conventions are not expected to have to price their publications below their production and distribution costs, nor to engage in complex cost-accounting to determine variable costs, but are also not expected to make a significant profit or surplus on the sale of such publications. This proposal further recognizes that such costs vary from member to member due to shipping costs.

4.1.1.2 Short Title: A Matter of Trust

Moved, to amend the proposal “Worldcon Publications” by striking out all of the words that the proposal would add to the WSFS Constitution and the commentary relevant to them, so that the proposal would then read:

Moved, to strike out Article 1, Subsection 1.5.3:

1.5.3: ~~Electronic distribution of publications, if offered, shall be opt-in.~~

Amendment Proposed by: Colin Harris

Seconded by: Adam Beaton, Warren Buff, Ian Stockdale

Commentary: The actual treatment of convention publications over the last decade (if not longer!) is more complex than implied by the existing constitutional wording. (Indeed, in some respects actual practice is arguably not even compliant to the constitution.) For instance:

- Memberships usually allow people to select paper/electronic pubs but in practice we only apply the decision to PRs, and still give everyone a printed souvenir book.
- The Pocket Program is by most standards a generally available publication which an independent observer would assess as directly comparable to the Souvenir Book, but we do not generally mail out paper copies to supporters and no-shows.

Moreover, member expectations in this area – particularly in the area of effective electronic communications – are evolving all the time in line with the wider social environment.

The main motion increases flexibility in some respects but has unfortunate side effects. For instance, a convention which wished to add a monthly email newsletter in

addition to its conventional printed progress reports would be obligated to offer a printed paper version of this newsletter as well.

It is clear that we need additional flexibility in the way we deliver publications and that the simple “opt-in” approach for electronic publications is not current with broader social trends. However, *a good constitution is one that is no longer than it needs to be*. The best option at this point is to remove 1.5.3 from the constitution and trust future conventions to make provision for paper distribution of *appropriate* publications, and to listen to and respect the expectations of the membership - and also to have the opportunity to *innovate* using electronic communication channels alongside their more traditional publications.

It should be emphasized that the makers of this amendment are in favor of continuing paper publications for the foreseeable future - but we do not believe this is something that is effectively controlled through the Constitution.