

NETIZENS ONLINE

TM Club # 5357724



- March 2012 Inaugural Online Meeting
- July 2012 Twice-a-month Meetings,
1st & 3rd Sundays
- November 2014 Charter Application
- Proposal for Consideration at February 2015
Toastmasters International Board Meeting
- March 25, 2016 – Chartered!

Executive Summary

Online communication and video-conferencing tools are now common in business and personal spheres. As Toastmasters aspires to be a leader in communication and leadership training worldwide, it is time that we provide members with opportunities, guidance and feedback to develop skills in effective communication - online.

Staff Study Group experience:

- The Netizens Online Toastmasters was sanctioned by Dan Rex in March 2012 to explore video-conferencing meetings. Held regular twice-a-month meetings since July 2012 and four-times-a-month meetings since December 2014.
- On November 7, 2015 Netizens filed an Application to Charter as an Undistricted Advanced Club (requiring Dual Memberships) with a specialty in Online Communications. At that time the club had 31 Charter Members, many longtime Toastmasters including 10 individuals who have collectively been awarded 20 DTMs.
- Netizens meetings abide by the TM program and agenda: all speeches are manual speeches that receive both oral and written evaluations. Netizens already operates as any other Toastmasters club.
- Online communication is a reality for many professionals. Many of us, longtime Toastmasters members, use the Netizen meetings to improve our video-conferencing presentations and trainings, and benefit from the safe environment and constructive feedback of fellow experienced Toastmasters.
- Netizens members can help inform and participate in the development of an Advanced Manual focused on online communication, and to establish practices and recommendations for online clubs

Recommendation:

The Netizens Online TM videos demonstrated to TM HQ the viability, methodology and quality of meetings possible using online conferencing tools.

- Online Meetings: provide recognized opportunities for improving effectiveness of professional communication via online tools. The TM Meetings are in-person, interactive and in real-time (i.e. not pre-recorded) and face-to-face via online camera.
- The interpretation of the term “**in person**” (“Clause 2.2.b”¹) be considered to mean: **interactive and in real-time** (i.e. not pre-recorded). This allows meeting participants to be present even when located in distributed locations. Online clubs are those that use real-time conferencing tools such that meeting attendees can see, hear and interactively participate in Club meetings.

¹ Toastmasters International, 2014, “*Governing Resource Documents*”, accessed 24 January, 2015
<<http://www.toastmasters.org/Leadership-Central/Governing-Documents>>

Industry Trends

In the last 10 years, the use of online conferencing has exploded. The use of webinars and videoconferencing is becoming common across the corporate, small business and home landscape with most small businesses undertaking learning seminars online, and an increasingly connected family home using Skype to keep up with family and friends.

- A recent Frost & Sullivan survey of C-level executives reports that around 60 percent of enterprises routinely use web conferencing².
- Skype, the online communication tool started in 2003, and now has 300 million users worldwide³.

Online video communication is now pervasive.

Strategic Alignment

Online Clubs support the goals and strategies of the Toastmasters International Strategic Plan, 2010.

Online clubs provide opportunities for improved member GROWTH AND RETENTION. Admitting online clubs responds to a growing market need, provides new avenues for current member development, provides opportunities for club creation across wider areas and provides opportunities for global connection. Online clubs offer continuity to members who are unable to continue ongoing involvement in a physical club during an extended leave of absence.

Online clubs extend TM EDUCATION PROGRAMS, modernising our program to align with business and social trends, allows more members to participate in our programs and positions Toastmasters to provide communications and leadership programs to organisations already exploiting online technologies to bring distributed employees together.

Admitting online clubs provides an opportunity for increased REVENUE for Toastmasters International, as it can support people currently prohibited by distance or unable to travel to a traditional club, create more opportunities for current members to join additional clubs and even opportunities for special-interest clubs with sparse memberships.

Online clubs remove barriers of locality that constrain the capacity for GLOBAL IMPACT. Quality online clubs could be accessed from any location in the world, meeting the needs – and interests – of members wherever they may be.

To Introduce Online Clubs as a supported delivery mode for Toastmasters International programs progresses all Objectives from the Strategic Plan for 2010. It positions Toastmasters

² Frost and Sullivan, 2013, "*Citrix GoToMeeting Named a Market Leader in Web Conferencing by Frost Sullivan*", Citrix, accessed 24 January, 2015 <<http://news.citrixonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Citrix-GoToMeeting-Named-a-Market-Leader-in-Web-Conferencing-by-Frost-Sullivan.pdf>>

³ Skype, 2013, "*Skype Celebrates a Decade of Meaningful Conversations*", accessed 24 January, 2015 <<http://blogs.skype.com/2013/08/28/skype-celebrates-a-decade-of-meaningful-conversations/>>

International to deliver communication and leadership skills as a leader in a world that is increasingly, regularly, online.

Operating Online Clubs

Meeting Procedures

The Netizens Group has been exploring the operation of a global online club since March 2012. It now meets four-times-a-month with 31 active, longtime members of Toastmasters International. Meetings use a regular agenda, with low-cost video conferencing facilities⁴, and all activities are manual activities across the Communication and Leadership manuals – receiving oral and written evaluations – just as other Toastmasters Clubs do. The club has established proven video and audio protocols that help manage effective meetings. The Netizens Group has made a number of recordings available to WHQ personnel.

Impacts to Educational Program

From the Netizens experience, all existing Leadership and Communication Manuals continue to be applicable within an online context. All activities are Manual activities and the online environment offers additional and valuable methods – and welcome challenges – to achieving the speech objectives.

Enhancements to Educational Program

There is an opportunity for a new Advanced Manual focusing on delivery of content including video content online. Such a manual could include projects on presenting a webinar (one-to-many presentation), facilitating an online meeting (interactive presentation between speaker and audience) and facilitating workshops through online conferencing tools, for example.

Governance of Online Clubs

With club members being likely to be distributed, geographical boundaries used for Areas, Divisions and Districts can be challenging to apply. Netizens is a truly global club, with members representing some 12 countries. While Netizens is currently looking to charter as Undistricted, an Online Club could be assigned to an existing Area, Division or District, or possibly even a specific online Area, Division or District structure, with similar spans of control as today.

Admitting Online Clubs

Online clubs, as evidenced by Netizens, can operate much the same as any regular Toastmasters Club. The Netizens Online Club, with its experienced Toastmasters and communicators, has developed significant expertise in managing online communications, have developed a strong and healthy club and have demonstrated that Toastmasters can offer Online Clubs as a valuable offering in an increasingly online world.

⁴ The Netizens Group currently uses Citrix GoToMeeting with good results - and continues to monitor developments across a range of conferencing tool providers.