GEORGIA CENTER *for* NONPROFITS

Georgia Nonprofit TECHNOLOGY REPORT

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Introduction

Technology plays a part in almost everything we do — at home, at work, and in our communities — and nonprofit organizations are no exception. Like any other business operations, Georgia's nonprofits rely on technology to help them serve constituents and operate programs.

The purpose of this report is to provide a first glimpse at data on Georgia nonprofits' attitudes toward and usage of technology. These findings inform our understanding of nonprofits, and over time, will help us establish trends, compare results, measure changes, and draw other conclusions about technology's impact on organizational efficiencies. Such understanding will help organizations better meet their missions by helping them strategically benchmark for future operations.

Overview of Organizations Surveyed

- Two-hundred and fourteen organizations participating in this survey — representing over 11,000 employees and 2,700 board members.
- Of these participants, one-third—33%—are executive directors.
- Half of respondents—51%—have annual operating budgets of at least $500,000.
- The primary field of service among these 214 organizations are human services (multi-purpose) (22%), educational (13%), arts and culture (9%), and youth development (7%).
- The majority of nonprofit organizations—70%—have one office location.
- Almost two-thirds of participating nonprofits—62%—have been in operation for 15 years or more.

Methodology

These findings are based on data from a self-selected sample of nonprofit organizations that completed a survey questionnaire distributed in the spring of 2005. The survey was distributed widely throughout the nonprofit community in advertisements appearing in our online publications circulated by e-mail and the Web site. As an added inducement, organizations returning completed survey questionnaires were entered into a drawing to win two roundtrip domestic airfares, compliments of Delta Air Lines.

Findings

- Sixty percent of survey respondents believe staff has adequate technology skills to perform needed job functions. Fewer than half—42%—think their organization has adequate equipment.
- Seventy percent say acquiring more technology equipment and increasing staff's technology skills will increase mission impact. Slightly more—76%—say it will increase organizational efficiency.
- Seventy-four percent of respondents feel technology has improved their ability to reach more people in need of services.
- Sixty-four percent believe technology enhances their ability to identify new areas of community need.
- Seventy-one percent say technology enables their organizations to develop and deliver new services to communities.
- More than half—63%—of respondents say their organization budgets annually for technology-related expenses. Of these, 47% budget less than $5,000. Only 26% have technology plans in place.
- Nearly one-third of respondents—29%—see obsolete equipment and an inability to keep up-to-date with new technology as their biggest organizational challenge. Key factors for this cited were funding (27%), staffing needs (19%), training (14%), and time (7%).
- Half of all executive directors surveyed—50%—believe technology is a mission-critical invest ment, necessary for strategic discussions related to planning and budget. Fewer than 14% think their the board of directors feels similarly.
- Over three-fourths—77%—state their organization's board of directors sees technology as a management or operation concern.
- The majority—72%—of respondents report they do not have any board members with technology expertise.
- Nearly one-third of respondents—27%—report having a dedicated technical support person on-staff. Half—50%—of these positions have existed for no more than five years.
- Fewer than a quarter of respondents—23%—feel the person in this position is qualified and provides ample support.
- Thirty-four percent say their organization's on-staff technical support person cannot keep up with the time demands of the organization's technology needs.

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Findings

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- Forty-two percent feel their organization is growing and facing technical challenges beyond the skill-level of the on-staff technical support person.
- More than half of all respondents—64%—use outside consultants for their technology needs.
- A quarter—26%—of all consulting engagements by nonprofits are for Web site-related activities. While repairs (22%), installations (21%), planning (15%), and maintenance (9%) accounted for other consulting needs.
- More than half—57%—of respondents say the most important consideration when selecting a technology consultant is expertise, followed by price (53%), and response time (20%).
- Thirty-eight percent of nonprofits surveyed who use technology consultants say they are disappointed with the timing, responsiveness, and dependability of consultants. An additional 24% cite the consultant's quality of work and their failure to meet expectations as disappointments.
- Almost half—48%—of all nonprofits surveyed feel they are more likely to pay for on-site technical support when a problem occurs, than budget for a dedicated technical support person on-staff, or develop a technology plan.

Conclusion

Findings from this survey show that respondents have a desire to increase staff skill levels and improve their technology-related equipment.

Survey responses suggest that nonprofit management needs to focus attention on planning and budgeting.

Results show organizations may need to more deliberately engage their board of directors in addressing technology.

To be more effective, technology consultants who work with nonprofits should consider responsiveness and meeting client expectations.

Even though cost is cited by respondents as a key barrier to implementing technology, organizations may want to explore better staffing the technology function; address time constraints; and develop strategies to keep up with the pace of technology.

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