

Benefits of ORURISA Membership

Oregon SW Washington Urban Regional Information Services Association – Membership Survey #2

Final results from the survey. Data collected Oct. 29, 2018.

Introduction

At its May 2018, Board of Directors retreat, the Oregon-Southwest Washington Chapter of Urban-Regional Information Services Association decided to survey chapter members to better understand training needs and interests. A team of board members¹ drafted survey questions for the board to review and finalized the survey after incorporating their comments. The survey opened August 1 and closed Aug. 27, 2018 after receiving 151 responses. The rate of response is unknown, because active membership cannot be readily determined. The chapter maintains an email list of about 1500 members, but active membership—defined as participating in chapter activities or paying chapter dues—may be significantly lower.

Context for this survey

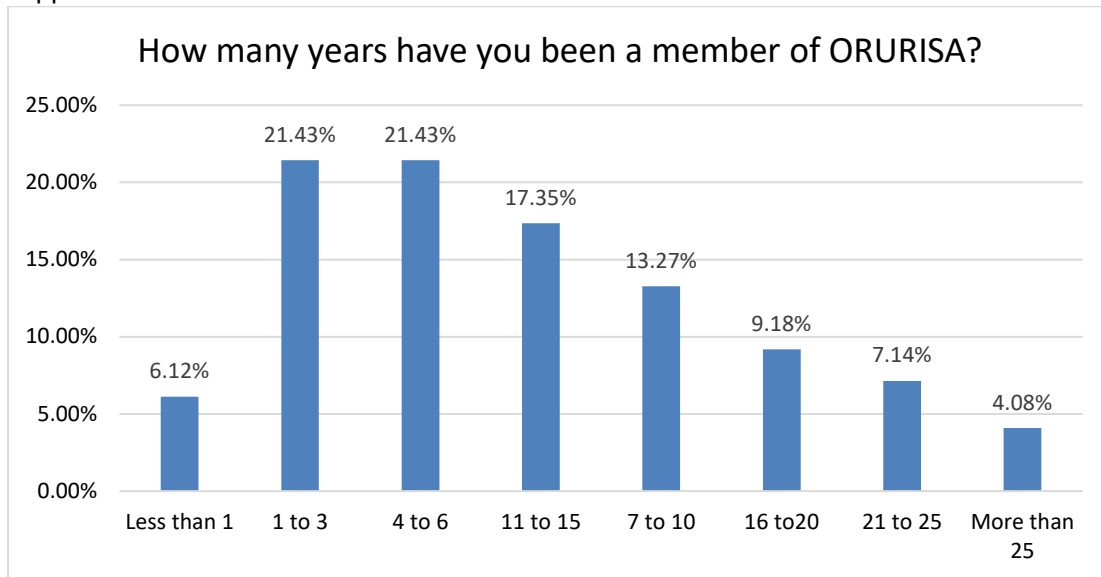
This is the second of three surveys members will be asked to complete. This survey considers various paths for moving ORURISA forward, in terms of benefits and expectations that accompany membership in ORURISA. The final survey will explore members’ interests in volunteering and other opportunities to increase the value of ORURISA membership.

Q1

How many years have you been a member of ORURISA?

Answered: 98

Skipped: 0



¹ Cy Smith, Theresa Burcsu, Robb Kirkman, Lesley Hedgewald, Alexa Todd, John Bragg

Answer choices	Responses
Less than 1	6.12%
1 to 3	21.43%
4 to 6	21.43%
11 to 15	17.35%
7 to 10	13.27%
16 to 20	9.18%
21 to 25	7.14%

Q1

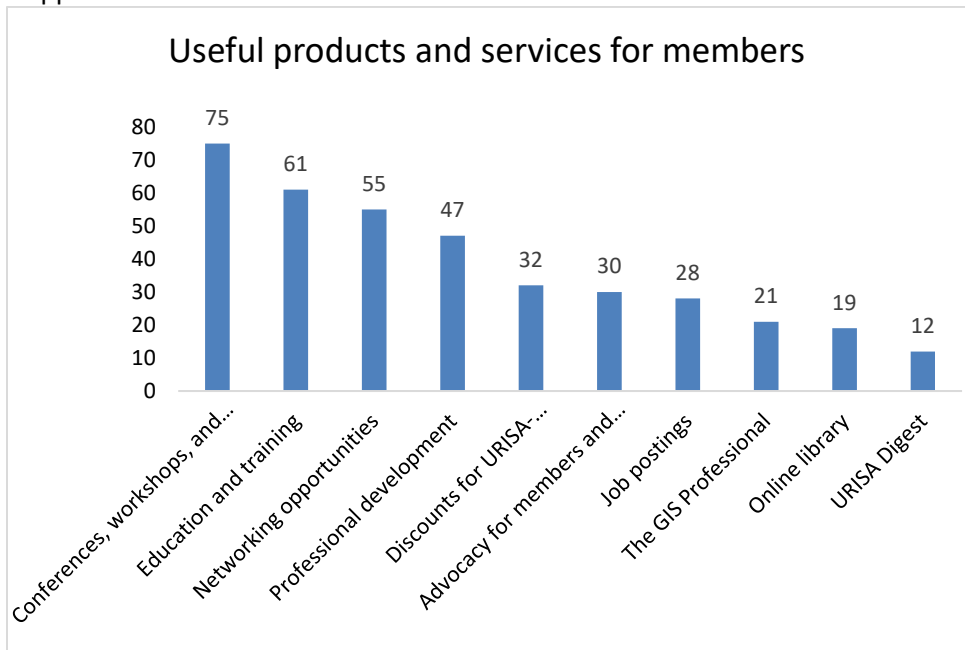
More than three quarters (79.6%) of respondents have been members 15 years or less. About two thirds (62%) have been members for 10 years or less. Almost half (49%) have been members for six years or less.

Q2

ORURISA provides a range of products and services for members. From the list, select those that are useful for you.

Answered: 94

Skipped: 4



Answer choices	Responses	
	#	%
Conferences, workshops, and symposia	75	79.79%
Education and training	61	64.89%
Networking opportunities	55	58.51%
Professional development	47	50.00%
Discounts for URISA-sponsored conferences and workshops	32	34.04%

Q2

Useful products and services break roughly into three groups: Training/education opportunities, networking and professional development; member services (discounts, advocacy, job postings); publications.

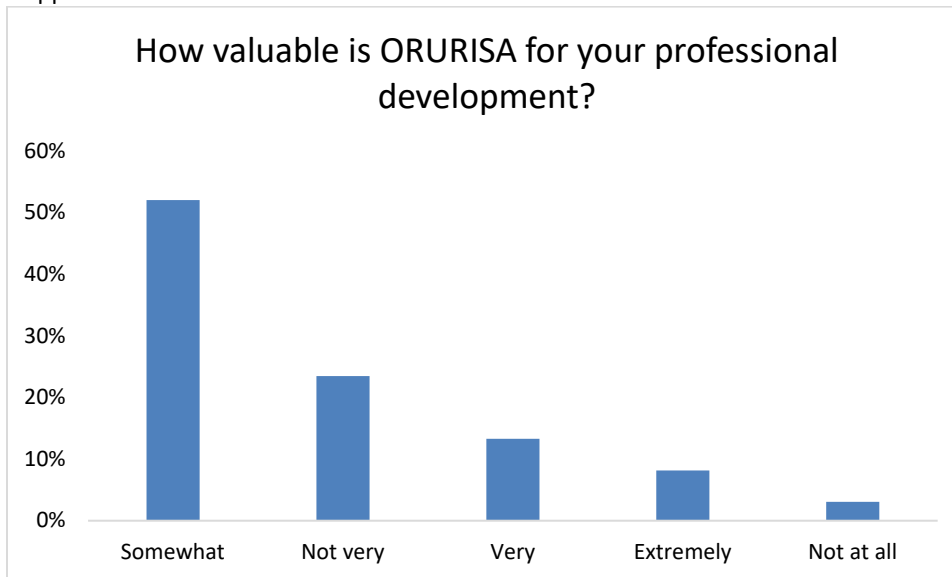
Advocacy for members and the profession	30	31.91%
Job postings	28	29.79%
The GIS Professional	21	22.34%
Online library	19	20.21%
URISA Digest	12	12.77%

Q3

How valuable is ORURISA for your professional development?

Answered: 98

Skipped: 0



Answer choices	Responses	
	%	#
Somewhat	52.04%	51
Not very	23.47%	23
Very	13.27%	13
Extremely	8.16%	8
Not at all	3.06%	3
Total		98

Q3

Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) consider ORURISA membership at least somewhat valuable.

Q4

What is the chief value of ORURISA membership for you?

Answered: 19

Skipped: 79

1. Conferences, Section meetings
2. Networking local and nationally. Being part of the profession, internationally.
3. relevant GIS information

4. Chiefly; to see what other people are doing and how they do it as well as sharing how I do things with others
5. Keeping up-to-date on new developments and applications of GIS related technologies.
6. Networking with other GIS Professionals. Education opportunities
7. Conferences with educational offerings. Networking.
8. GIS In Action, the support ORURISA provides to the sections,
9. GIS-in-Action Conference
10. Networking
11. Learning what others are doing with GIS.
12. The chief value for me is that my local chapter has free membership. I live in a small rural location dominated by tourism and the people in my local chapter are the primary way I stay in touch with professionals. I work full time, I am seriously underpaid (I should be paid at least 20%-30% more than what I make now), and am taking one or two university classes per year. To say the least, I struggle financially to make ends meet. My employer will not pay for membership, and I absolutely cannot afford a membership fee. If I have to pay a fee, I will be forced to drop my membership. The social and professional interaction is so important to me that if I had to pay a membership fee I would seriously consider simply showing up at meetings/events and begging for free admission.
13. Professional community, GIS Code of Ethics (GISP)
14. User group meetings
15. Networking
16. Professional development
17. Allows me to network with GIS users and stay current on new developments in geospatial sensing and mapping, data stewardship, and related outreach/communication; increases the value of my professional networks with Oregon agencies.
18. networking
19. low or no cost training and networking

Q5

What one thing would increase the value of ORURISA membership for you?

Answered: 40

Skipped: 58

Comments

1. Relationships with national chapters; ORURISA is too isolated.
2. More information
3. Industry and employer recognition & support
4. I will definitely participate if there is online meet up. It would be really nice to have a local meeting instead of traveling far if online is not possible.
5. more trainings
6. More in-person events, meetings, workshops, etc., in the county where I live and work.
7. Knowing what the benefits are.
8. Events/Activities in Central Oregon
9. no-cost training to attain certifications

Q4, Q5 & Q8

For most members, the value of ORURISA membership is in its ability to bring GIS users together for training, information sharing, professional development and networking.

Comment #12 on Q4 emphasizes the potential hardship that paid membership would mean to at least one chapter member. Comments about wages elsewhere (see comments on Q5) indicate this barrier may affect others. This trend is further reflected in comments on Q8.

Does/should ORURISA advocate higher wages for GIS professionals? How?

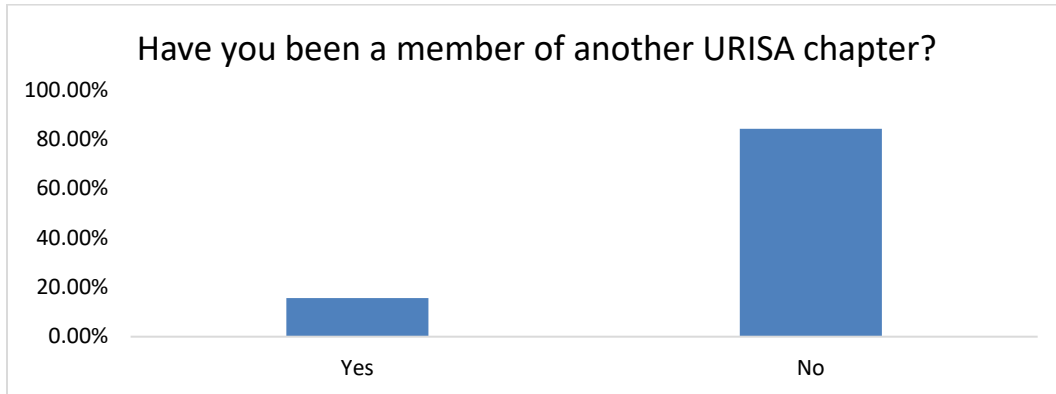
10. More inclusivity. As a volunteer organization, I understand that some people are the "doers" and dedicate themselves to the association. Sometimes, the doers become insular/cliue-like and control the group in a detrimental fashion.
11. Continue offering low cost training opportunities and GIS in Action conference
12. More things going on - it doesn't seem that ORURISA has had too many opportunities other than GIS In Action over the last few years.
13. I work in a Sheriff's Search And Rescue. I need the immigration to go from a 911 Center, law enforcement, Fire and FEMA
14. Make members aware of the above mentioned resources.
15. It's great that you are very active with the young professionals, but as someone who has aged in the profession, I am now seeing age discrimination amongst my peers. It might be of interest to others how to keep progressing after 50.
16. No sure
17. Facilitate meetings with GoToMeeting. I am not positive, but I think there used to be annual meeting or some sort in local. I don't travel much, so that was very nice.
18. better networking and knowledge sharing or mentoring
19. Additional networking opportunities
20. Will be retiring soon, so NA
21. Greater advocacy for state issues regarding GIS. Greater mentoring of developing professionals. More formal forums for issues.
22. Move GIS in Action around the state. Eugene, Bend, Medford, etc.
23. Employer Support
24. advocating for increased salaries in the GIS field
25. More 1 day, locally available training options (ideally, not expensive)
26. Larger rate of participation in my local chapter by GIS professionals in my region.
27. Networking opportunities.
28. Knowing about events, publications, meetings, etc. Aside from the surveys in the last few months, I have heard nearly nothing about/from ORURISA.
29. plastics
30. Keeping it as it has been - simple.
31. really provides the services listed in question 3.
32. That I had joined earlier in my career; I'm 67 and close to retirement after over 20 years in the field.
33. A more local chapter. Rural users have to travel significantly to find fellow ORURISA members.
34. Webinars
35. More training opportunities
36. I would benefit from more networking social events
37. Having after hours (After 6pm) events, training, etc.
38. ORISA officers should introduce themselves clearly at GIS in Action and not assume we know who they are. Members should be welcomed at meetings. It is impossible for an 'outsider' to comprehend anything.
39. More local chapter events/workshops other than GIS In Action
40. More frequent local activities. Events in the valley are difficult to travel to.

Q6

Have you been a member of another URISA chapter?

Answered: 96

Skipped: 2



Answer choices	Responses	
	%	#
Yes	15.63%	15
No	84.38%	81

Q7

From your experience with the other chapter, do you have any suggestion to increase the value of ORURISA membership?

Answered: 15

Skipped: 83

Answer choices	Response	
	%	#
Yes	20.00	3
No	80.00	12
Total		15

Comments

1. More public forums aside from GIS in Action
2. regular email newsletter
3. Keep it local; keep it simple.

Q8

Do you have comments or questions about the OneURISA proposal? (See FAQs 1, 2, 3)

Answered: 81

Skipped: 17

Answer choices	Responses	
	%	#
Yes	19.75	16
No	80.25	65
Total		81

Comments

1. I can't afford a membership fee. Going to a paid model might work for people in most places where their employer might be willing to pay the membership fee, but for people like me, changing the membership model will remove the ability for me to cope with my situation. I am female (in a still male-dominant field), I live in a rural area, and I am the only person at my work doing what I do. Being a member of my local URISA chapter provides me with the professional validation I need (and can't get at work), as well as social support from like-minded professionals. Being a member of URISA is the primary way I connect with "people like me." I don't want to lose that. Professional organisations (other than URISA) simply don't have a presence where I live because of the low population density.
2. I don't agree with it. Having local non-associated chapters are better for everyone.
3. This is a good direction to be taking.
4. I have no interest in being a OneURISA member.
5. I think having everything under one umbrella can lead to cost savings for members. I'm hoping this is true and cost savings are indeed passed on to members
6. The comment is that I'm not quite sure how this is all going to work out for me.
7. Let's think about a new name that does not use URISA
8. I do not think OneURISA applies to most of our membership.
9. We'll see how the fee thing works in Oregon and SW Washington.
10. We need to ability to have cheap local chapters.
11. none at this time, cost is important though
12. Money grab?
13. As I mentioned earlier, I cannot afford a membership fee, and I would seriously consider showing up to meetings/events and literally begging for free admission. I'm a full time professional taking college classes when I can (1 class per quarter, currently enrolled as a non-degree seeking student). So please consider people like me when designing student membership rules. I am both a student and a full time professional! My income is modest (\$44,000/year) and tuition is about \$2000-\$3000 per class (so my income is more like \$35,000-\$38,000/year after tuition). Some organizations use a sliding membership fee based on income, which might be workable for me if it is set low enough (say \$1-5). Please also take into consideration the fact that it is much easier to maintain a membership base if there is no barrier to renewing membership each year. I suspect that once URISA starts charging local chapters for membership, there will be people like me who will stop being members simply because renewing membership is such a hassle if you have to opt in to it. As it is set up now with my local chapter, my membership renews each year WHEN I DO NOTHING AT ALL. I absolutely would not store my credit card number in the URISA database (due to concerns about hacking), so an auto-renewal option (assuming you set up auto-renewal by providing a credit card number) is not going to work for me either. That's why having a free system is so powerful--an opt out system

provides immense utility to the member. Going with an opt in, pay-as-you-go system is much less valuable to me and over time I am likely to simply not respond and stop being a member.

14. Communication from URISA has been close to non-existent. Though this proposal has been in development for 5 years, news of it has not been widely distributed.
15. Consolidating seems to expand benefits - that being said; for four years I have been very unaware of what benefits ORURISA had aside from a meeting once maybe every year or so.
16. I'm unlikely to pay for membership. I don't identify so much as a GIS person anymore, but as data analyst and programmer.
17. Many regional groups bring a local or regional focus to the direction or URISA as it functions for these professionals. I fear this would be lost.
18. Don't do it.
19. \$75 membership dues is too high.

Q9

Is this the first time you've heard of the proposed changes? (See FAQs 4, 5, 6, 7)

Answered: 81

Skipped: 17

Answer choices	Responses	
	%	#
Yes	48.15	39
No	51.85	42
Total		81

Comments

1. I have only heard about this through the surveys.
2. This is the most recent time I've heard of recent changes. Seems like an identity crisis to me.
3. ORURISA needs to be part of OneURISA. Very disappointing not to have the Oregon Chapter part of the initial signing on into OneURISA
4. I heard about it recently at a local user group meeting

Q10

Do you have any comments or questions about how the changes will affect your local chapter membership or dues? (See FAQs 8, 9, 10)

Answered: 80

Skipped: 18

Answer choices	Responses	
	%	#
Yes	30.00	24
No	70.00	56
Total		76

Comments

Q10

Responses reveal some angst among members. Members generally:

- Question the benefits of OneURISA
- Have difficulty seeing the benefits of OneURISA for the local chapter.
- Think the dues and renewal requirements may reduce local chapter membership over time.
- Don't like the change in dues.

1. The primary questions at this point are: if I can't "pay up," when are you going to drop me as a member? Will I be notified?
2. Please keep dues low as possible.
3. Given that local chapters will charge their own fee in addition to the core one, has there been an attempt to estimate the impact of this? I could see overall fees decreasing as chapters may gain access to a wider membership base, but they also just as easily could increase overall if chapters maintain existing fees. I think this is particularly important to review given members will be required to join the local chapter, if present. However, I also recognize that variability in regional needs and economics make it difficult to determine what is 'equitable' across chapters (i.e. some chapters may have to pay for meeting space, and some may not).
4. This focus on internal organization is a prime example of why interest groups and organizations are on the decline. It benefits the general membership very little, downgrades the autonomy of the local chapters, and feeds the delusions of grandeur of the "International Organization's" leadership. From the point of view of this "Chapter Member" there is no benefit to a "united/aligned International Organization."
5. If it's all one, then there should only be one set of dues and those ought to be fairly inexpensive.
6. Seems like it's re-organization at a level I never interact with
7. I think changing dues [dues] to a large number would be dumb
8. Since we have a history of supporting ORURISA through event registrations I would expect chapter dues to be minimal or event registrations to be discounted
9. Those are abstract answers, not specific. I think the answer specifically for ORURISA is that whereas membership used to be without cost and automatic with GIA, now membership costs \$195 (and you get a bunch of other things that you don't want, it is almost as good as a cable TV package). An FAQ for ORURISA might have been helpful. So yes, the dues stay the same in that $\$0 = \$195 + \$0$ (see the $\$0$ is still the same).
10. I won't be paying dues if there is not a clear return on my investment. I don't need to join to feel good about my field, that is not enough of a reason.
11. I don't think this will have much difference for ORURISA members
12. If the cost is anywhere near \$75 you will be losing membership. Also, I find this statement to be very offensive! "However, can you really afford not to be a member with all the challenges currently facing our profession and your own development in a constantly changing industry?" There are many ways to be part of our profession that do not cost anything. I can certainly afford to be a member, but statements like this make me not really want to be a member.....
13. Too expensive.
14. see answer to question 6
15. FAQs are nicely vague on dues going forward. They are asking for a commitment without all the details
16. Still do not know how much the dues are going to be, so obviously that remains a question.
17. Will not be happy if the local chapter will now in force dues
18. I'm not sure that I truly am a member. I am also sending comments to admin@orurisa.org
19. The unified approach would make it so less people would become members. Right now it is easy to be a member of ORURISA.
20. I have no interest in maintaining a national membership regardless of cost
21. If you are a board member will you be able to waive the membership fee. There are other organizations I'm part of that offer this membership reimbursement for being an elected board member. Also, will there be student membership discounts? Many students will not join

because they can't afford membership dues if not affordable or highly beneficial. Just a thought to get more student involvement in URISA.

22. I have another professional organization that is more meaningful to me.

23. The one URISA concept should maximize benefits to members and streamline enrollment, and not cause a lot of angst for members.

Q11

Do you have comments or questions about other requirements? (See FAQs 11, 12, 13)

Answered: 77

Skipped: 21

Answer choices	Responses	
	%	#
Yes	5.19	4
No	94.81	73
Total		77

1. I think the proposed fee structure will cause membership to decline greatly.
2. "If an existing Chapter elects not to become part of OneURISA, they will cease to be a chapter of URISA and lose all rights and benefits of a chapter." What rights and benefits would those be? What rights, enumerated by any institution, are threatened by ceasing to be part to an organization which already does not represent it? This is toothless, vapid language.
3. The comment is that I'm not quite sure how this is all going to work out for me.
4. Making everything too uniform can take away individual identity
5. Seems consistent with other professional organizations and we should have tighter coordination with the parent organization.

Q11

The responses to Q11 suggest the Chapter might want to develop a white paper that envisions the chapter operating either as a member of OneURISA or as an independent entity, and compares and contrasts the impacts on the membership of each option.

Q12

What is your overall opinion of the proposed membership changes? Move the slider to a position that indicates your view.

Answered: 65

Skipped: 33

Average number	49
Total number	3165
Responses	65

The slider scale represents the range of opinion from negative (0) to positive (100).