

Results of the 2009 *Cartographic Perspectives* Readership Survey

INTRODUCTION

Cartographic Perspectives (CP) publishes interesting and unique cartographically-related material from a diverse population of mapping enthusiasts. CP has been published three times a year since the journal's first issue appeared in 1989. This current issue marks CP's sixty-third issue. By most measures in the print industry, this longevity should be cause for excitement. And publishing sixty-three issues is. However, as with all entities that persist through time, one should be introspective as to what makes the journal appealing and what is lackluster. This introspection is important so as to gauge the journal's health and make plans for a continued successful future. This article presents the results of a survey of NACIS members that was conducted in January 2009. The purpose of this article is to present and discuss the shared sentiments of NACIS members regarding CP, what the membership sees as CP's strengths and weaknesses, and what new directions the membership would like to see the journal take in order to maintain its unique appeal.

DESIGNING THE QUESTIONS

At the fall NACIS meeting at Missoula, Montana, CP's Editorial Board discussed ways in which the journal could be improved. Several ideas were floated before it became apparent that the board did not really understand what NACIS members thought about the journal. With this in mind, a readership survey was discussed as a way to gain insight into what you, as a NACIS member, feel about the journal. We decided that the survey would take place early in 2009 and discussed how the survey would be carried out. We decided that mailing the survey to NACIS members would be too slow and would reduce the number of respondents. We looked toward the Web as a friendlier and timelier delivery method for the survey, which we hoped would ultimately increase the number of respondents. With a response rate of 26.3 percent we believe the method of delivery we chose provided us with a solid sample of NACIS members. We hosted the survey through SurveyMonkey.com, which ended up being an inexpensive and easy way to host this survey. For those of you who participated in the survey, we thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think.

After deciding on the delivery method for the survey, the next big issue was to develop the questions. Between the fall NACIS meeting and the end of 2008, several iterations of the survey questions were circulated among CP's Editorial Board members. The final set of questions is displayed in Table 1. In designing the questions, the overall goal was to find out the NACIS members' opinions about CP's content. We used a combination of fixed-choice questions and open-ended questions that allowed more latitude for each respondent to use his or her own words to express

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what is appealing about *CP* and what needs to be improved. We will first review the logic behind the various questions asked in the survey and then examine the responses to the questions in some detail.

1. When your copy of *CP* arrives in the mail, which sections do you read?
2. What kind of changes would you like to see in *CP*'s content? In your response, please consider what sections you would like eliminated and suggest possible new content.
3. To help reduce publication costs, would it be acceptable for *CP* to be published twice a year instead of its current three times a year schedule?
4. To reduce printing costs and limit paper usage, would you be in favor of receiving only an online version of *CP*?
5. Would you be willing to pay higher membership dues if *CP* continues to be published three times a year in print format?
6. Would you ever consider submitting content to *CP* for publication consideration?
7. If you would not consider submitting content to *CP* for publication, could you comment on what prevents you from doing so?
8. Have you ever considered submitting to *CP*, and then elected to submit to another journal instead?
9. Which journal(s) have you opted to submit to instead of *CP*?
10. Why did you decide to submit to the alternative journal(s) you listed above?
11. Have you ever submitted an article to *CP* for publication consideration?
12. How would you rate your experience during the *CP* review process?
13. Please comment on anything else dealing with *CP* that would help to shape its future and ensure its longevity.
14. What is your profession?
15. How long have you been a NACIS member?
16. Have you ever attended the NACIS conference?
17. How regularly do you attend the NACIS conference?

Table 1. Questions asked in the *CP* Survey.

“Coupled with new delivery mediums (such as blogs and other Web-based forums such as CartoTalk) and other publication outlets (such as Map & Geography Libraries), we were interested in how relevant the current sections are to NACIS members.”

The purpose of the first question was to find out which sections of the journal are read more often than the others and, more specifically, which sections, if any, are not examined all that frequently. Those that are not examined with great frequency could be targeted for changes or replaced with other more interesting content. Although the nature of the individual sections in *CP* has changed since it first appeared, more recent issues have been consistent in the content offered by the various sections. The second question focused on what the membership would like to see changed in *CP*'s content. We were conscious that there have been changes in the map-making practice since *CP*'s inception. Coupled with new delivery mediums (such as blogs and other Web-based forums such as CartoTalk) and other publication outlets (such as *Map & Geography Libraries*), we were interested in how relevant the current sections are to NACIS members. Printing *CP* is a considerable cost to the organization. While printing costs have remained relatively stable over the years, other journals have made their content available over the Web, for a variety of reasons. There are many benefits to a Web-based offering: reduced paper consumption, more timely delivery, easier access for current readership, as well as the potential for broadening the readership of the journal. However, there are also tradeoffs to consider when the board deliberates over making any potential changes to the journal. The third, fourth, and fifth survey questions sought information on the willingness of NACIS members to consider changing the frequency of the journal's publication or to make the move to providing the journal exclusively via the Internet.

We were also aware that *CP* is not the only journal that publishes cartography-related material. Hence, we were curious as to whether or not members consider *CP* as an outlet for their publications. Moreover, if they did not consider *CP*, we wanted to know what kept them from submitting to the journal and why they decided to publish elsewhere. These concerns formed the basis of questions six through ten.

We also wanted to add to our knowledge about the experiences of those individuals who have submitted something to *CP*. The review process should be a beneficial and smooth experience for the article author(s), reviewers, and the editor. Therefore, we wanted to hear about the good and bad of *CP*'s review procedures in order to further improve the editorial process. We designed questions eleven and twelve to provide us with this information.

Finally, question thirteen was developed to allow the membership to provide comments on issues that they felt were missed by the previous twelve questions. Questions fourteen through seventeen were created to capture some basic information on the demographics of survey respondents so that we could see if we had responses from a broad cross-section of NACIS members. These demographic variables served an important role in performing some cross-tabulations in the analysis.

SURVEY RESULTS

This section presents the results of the survey. We will begin by presenting some basic demographic information on the respondents. Next, each question will be presented individually along with its results. There were a total of 237 respondents who took part in this survey. This comprises 26 percent of the NACIS present and former members database ($n = 901$), to whom the survey was sent out. We received responses from a wide range of NACIS members, who work in a number of different types of jobs (Figure 1). Our respondents ranged from long-time NACIS members who have supported the organization since its inception to freshly-minted Nacites (Figure 2). Most of the respondents (73 percent) had attended our annual meeting at least once, but we also received replies from some members who have never or only occasionally attended the conference (Figure 3). Therefore, we believe that the survey provides us with a set of responses that do reflect the diversity of the NACIS membership.

Which sections of CP do NACIS members frequent and how could we improve the content that we offer in CP to better meet members' needs and match their interests?

As shown by Figure 4, the Mapping Methods and Techniques section is always read by the highest percentage of survey respondents, while fewer than 30 percent of respondents always read the Letters from the Editor and Book Review sections. Most respondents read the sections that they don't regularly read at least occasionally. When compared to the other self-ranking criteria, few respondents reported rarely or never reading sections. Those sections that were most commonly rarely read included the Letters from the Editor, Book Reviews, and Cartographic Collections.

In reviewing the ninety-four suggestions that respondents made about what they would like to see changed about *CP*, we classified suggestions into general categories of the types of changes that respondents would like to see. Types of suggested changes include: practical tips on how to accomplish a mapping task (15), more maps (12), more information on software capabilities for those thinking about trying a particular platform

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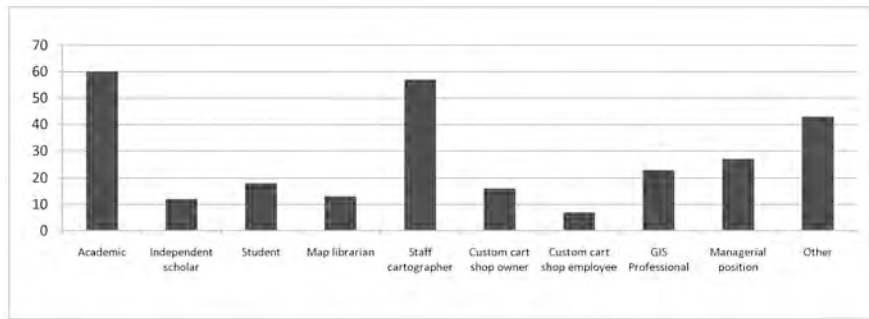


Figure 1. Survey respondent professions. Some respondents indicated more than one profession, so the total number of professions exceeds the number of respondents.

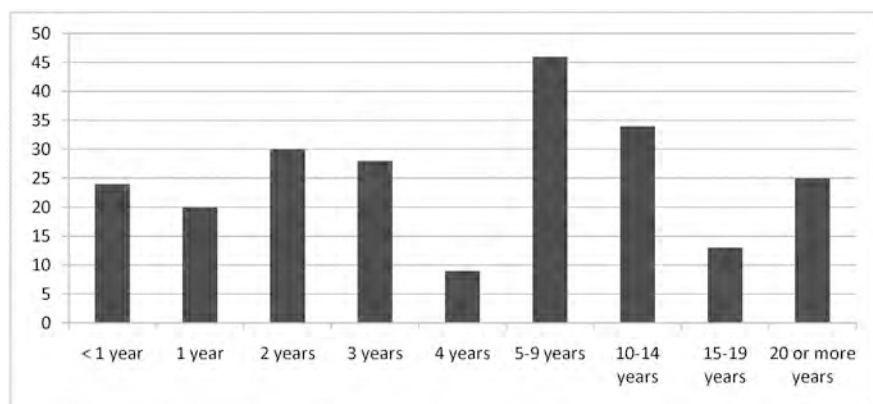


Figure 2. Length of NACIS membership among survey respondents.

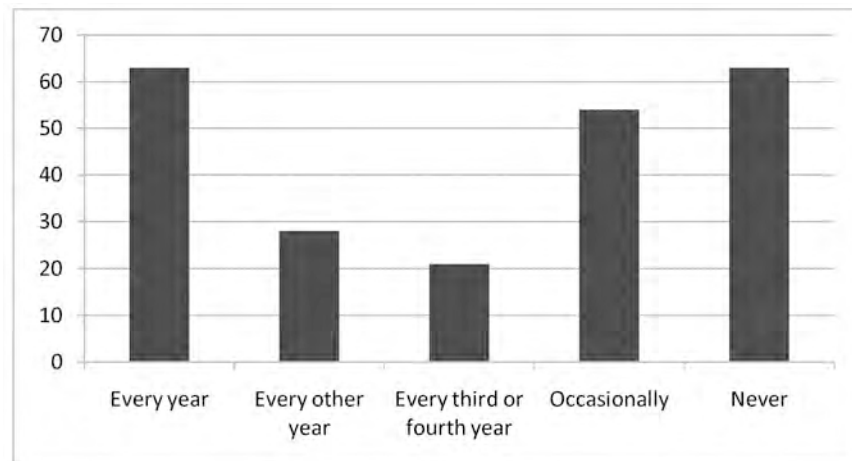


Figure 3. Frequency of NACIS annual meeting attendance by survey respondents.

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(11), critical-social theory/history of cartography (4), refereed articles (4), map librarianship (3), and teaching cartography (1). It was interesting to note that practical instruction, more maps, and technical aspects were the areas which generated the greatest number of suggestions. “Short, descriptive pieces on how a particular map was made, especially using a creative ‘trick’ or unusual design technique” and “New approaches with Illustrator, work-a-rounds with ArcGIS, new datasets, etc.” echo the sentiments expressed for the practical instructions category.

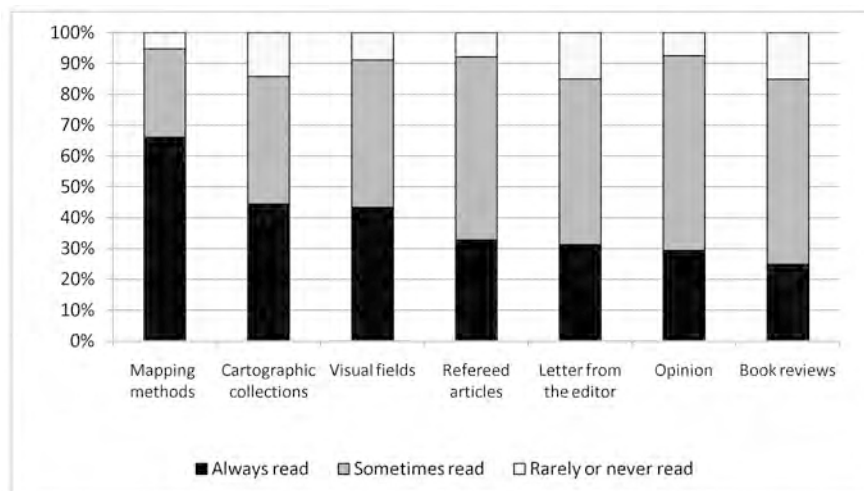


Figure 4. Percent of respondents indicating frequency of reading CP sections.

In the technical aspects area, responses generally agreed that the current Mapping Methods and Techniques section was the one they almost always read. But, they would like to see more content that specifically addressed software, tools, and applications and how these are being integrated to make well-designed maps. Since *CP* is all about maps, it was not too surprising to read that NACIS members also wanted to see more maps and discussion about these maps printed in the journal. A typical response in the “more maps” category was the following comment:

I don't read (or need) articles on skill-building--if I need to learn something, I'll be doing seminars/tutorials--not going to a *CP* article that will be dated, no matter how current when written, within a year or two. What I like best is seeing clever, imaginative maps, then essays on who made this map, how, what value or audience targeted. I get more from seeing what other mapmakers are doing, rather than reading the latest “publish or perish” paper from an academic.

An additional idea offered for inclusion was to report on what cartography majors were doing or their projects. There were also a number of responses (33 in total) that indicated that the journal should not change its content.

Publication Frequency and Format

Three-quarters of respondents (75 percent) indicated that they would be in favor of reducing *CP*'s printing frequency to reduce printing costs. Depending upon page count and the number of color pages, each issue of *CP* costs approximately \$7,000 to produce and distribute. Printing costs have been creeping upward and are likely to continue to do so. A year's worth of *CP* costs NACIS about \$21,000. Reducing the publication frequency to twice a year or making the journal available online would help to reduce printing costs considerably.

In recent years, perhaps as a cost-cutting measure, many journals have given their readership the option to receive their subscriptions entirely online, entirely in print, or both. Opinion was divided on whether or not to publish *CP* exclusively online, with 50 percent of respondents indicating they would be in favor of receiving only an online version, while

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50 percent were not in favor. A slightly greater number of respondents (117 vs. 115) indicated they are not in favor of an “online only” option. A significant contingent of NACIS members appears to prefer receiving a printed version. There was no relationship between length of membership in NACIS and whether or not a respondent was in favor of an online-only version of *CP*. Interestingly, however, of the 23 respondents who have been NACIS members for less than a year, only 13 percent were in favor of an online-only version, a much lower percentage than for other lengths of membership. One interpretation of this may be that new members need something tangible from their NACIS membership as they have not yet had a large amount of exposure to the organization and the personal connections and knowledge they develop through interacting with other NACIS members. This may indicate that retaining a print version of *CP* could play an important role in making new members feel like they are a part of the organization.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of respondents would be willing to pay higher membership dues to keep the same *CP* publication frequency. Currently, NACIS regular members pay \$42.00 per year in annual dues (students pay only \$28.00). Compared to other cartography journals, *CP* dues are very reasonable. This willingness to pay increased dues in order to maintain both the current publication frequency and a printed version of *CP* seems to indicate that members are broadly satisfied with the current frequency and format of *CP*.

Contributing to CP

Almost all survey respondents (87 percent) indicated that they would consider submitting content to *CP* for publication consideration. More academics and students than cartography and GIS professionals or map librarians indicated that they would consider submitting to *CP* (100 percent vs. ~83 percent). This is perhaps not surprising given the imperative for academics and students to publish their work, but it is encouraging to see that even members without a professional requirement to publish might consider submitting something to *CP*.

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The few respondents who would not consider submitting to *CP* answered a follow-up question. In reviewing the responses to the follow-up question, several barriers appear to be preventing individuals from contributing to *CP*. Eleven respondents indicated that they did not have “enough experience” to contribute to *CP*. Specifically, what constituted “experience” took on a number of qualifiers. In some cases, experience included the following: “I do no research that could be published,” “I don’t feel like I have enough cartographic knowledge to write an article,” “I only have a Master’s, not a Doctorate. My assumption is that I don’t have the credentials,” and “I don’t believe I have anything to contribute that would qualify for publication.” Four people indicated they simply “don’t do research.” Another four respondents indicated that they did not have “enough time” or were “too busy” to contribute to the journal while another four indicated that they “are by no means a good writer.” My experience as Editor of *CP* tells me that good writing has never been a qualifier for submitting something for publication consideration.

Of those respondents who have considered submitting to *CP*, 18 percent of respondents decided upon another outlet. A somewhat larger percentage of academics and map librarians submitted their work elsewhere than did professional cartographers (32 percent and 38 percent versus 12 percent). By far, *Cartography and Geographic Information Science (CaGIS)* and *Cartographica* were the two journals that were most commonly targeted by

members who considered *CP* but submitted elsewhere. *CaGIS* was mentioned fourteen times while *Cartographica* was listed twelve times. Journals listed three or fewer times included *Journal of Geography and Map Libraries*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *Geographical Review*, *The Professional Geographer*, *The Cartographic Journal*, *Transactions in GIS*, *The International Journal of GIScience*, *Computers & Geosciences*, *Coordinates*, *Bulletin of the Society of Cartographers*, *Imprint*, and *MapReport*. There were also a handful of journals that were mentioned only once. Additionally, one respondent indicated that s/he only published in “higher ranked journals” and s/he did not feel *CP* warranted a higher ranking.

Those respondents who chose to submit their work elsewhere were driven by a number of considerations. The most prevalent reason that their work was submitted elsewhere related to *CP*'s reputation (or lack thereof). Some respondents were of the view that, compared to other cartographically-themed journals, *CP* has a weaker reputation and that those seeking tenure or other academic promotions would necessarily choose to publish elsewhere. Responses such as “higher profile journals with wider readerships,” “prestige of the journal,” and “better academic reputation, larger readership” were indicative of how some individuals view *CP* and its order within the ranks of academic cartography journals. Other responses mentioned that publishing exclusively in one journal was not appropriate. For instance, one response indicated that they had recently “published in *CP* and need to establish a diverse publication portfolio for promotion and tenure.”

Another category of responses focused on the “poor fit” between the respondent's specific research topic and the journal. For instance, one respondent indicated that other journals have a “more international perspective; larger readership.” Another respondent said that they thought that other journals had “reviewers [that] would be more knowledgeable.” Still another individual noted that “*CP* had little history in the topic of my choice.” A surprising response, given the history of NACIS and its founding members, came from a respondent who stated that s/he didn't think “*CP* would be interested in an article about a specific aspect of map librarianship.” However, *CP* has an entire section devoted to Map Librarianship.

A handful of responses indicated that their decision was based on a previous problem with the review process or that their decision not to publish in *CP* was due to the journal's not being available online.

Experience with submitting to CP

Figure 5 shows the number of respondents who have ever submitted to *CP*. Approximately one-third of respondents (29 percent) have submitted something for publication consideration. Competition for content is tough in the print world, and academic cartography journals are no exception. *CP* continually struggles with finding sufficient content, and it is apparent that a small number of respondents supply the bulk of *CP*'s content. For reasons we will explore later, a majority of *CP*'s readership has not contributed to the journal for a variety of reasons.

Those who have submitted to *CP* have generally had positive experiences with the review process (85 percent), while a smaller number of respondents had neutral views about their experience(s) with *CP* reviewing. Looking over the individual responses to this question, it appears that the most common response was that the submitter had no problems with the review process (18). However, there were a small number of complaints about the review process. Some of these complaints included issues authors had with the overly negative comments made by some of

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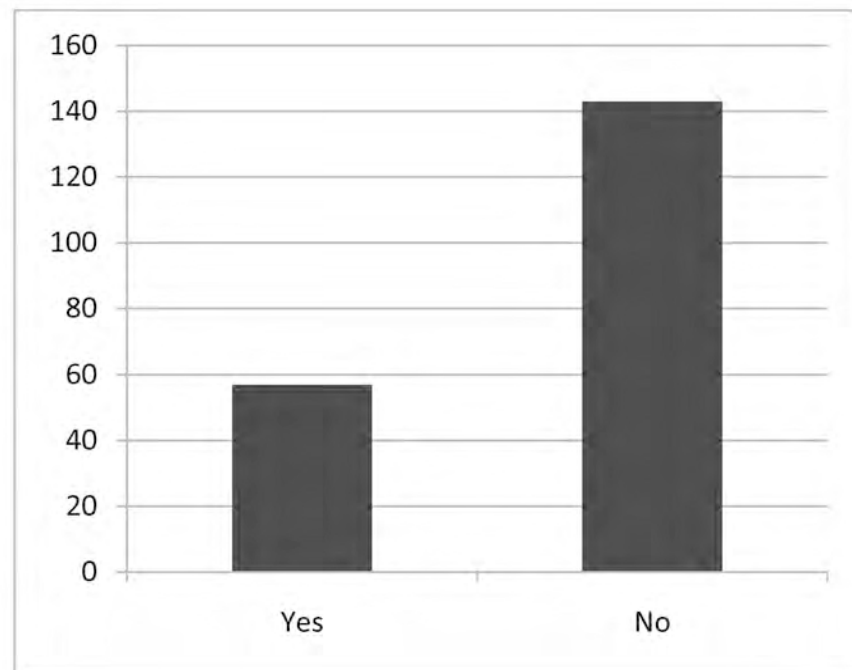


Figure 5. Number of respondents who have ever submitted to CP.

the reviewers. For instance, one respondent offered their experience with overly harsh or negative reviewer comments: "One of my reviewers was rather negative...their comments, though somewhat helpful, were difficult to swallow and I could not consider them as constructive." Other complaints include the view held by three respondents that *CP* includes only "theoretical-based" articles. One such respondent's opinion was that s/he felt the reviewers were "hardcore academic reviewers who insist that EVERY peer-reviewed article in *CP* have a theoretical component—diversity be damned. My articles do not fall in this category." Another individual offered their experience in that the "Editor liked the piece but it was neither "technical" enough nor 'scientific' enough for the readers."

"... put CP online."

On a different theme, three individuals felt the review process took too long. One of these individuals commented on their experience: "[I]t took over six months to get the reviews back and then took almost two years for it to come out in print." Aside from these issues, one individual suggested that "when circumstances warrant, the anonymity of the review process be lifted so that the reviewers and author(s) be able to discuss the particulars of the manuscript, its merits, and shortcomings."

Any other suggestions

Our final question generated by far the greatest number and range of responses. While it is difficult to parse out every idea offered in these responses (and there were quite a few—101 to be exact), several general themes do appear. One of the most frequently suggested improvements is to put *CP* online. There were, however, many different ideas on what constitutes "online" for different respondents. In the simplest case, putting *CP* online meant that the entire journal would be fully accessible/searchable to anyone in a convenient format (such as PDF). Some individuals voiced an opinion that a newly designed *CP* online should completely replace the print version, arguing that the online version would cut printing costs

and be more convenient and accessible to readers. A smaller number of individuals voiced their preference for keeping a print version available. Putting *CP* online also conjured up ideas of creating a *CP*-like blog, social network page, or an open source environment. Yet another avenue for exploration was to get *CP* into more visible electronic databases, which would encourage a wider and larger readership.

Another general category of suggestions related to expanding or changing *CP*'s content. Generally, academics were pleased with the diversity of topics covered in *CP*, while higher numbers of map librarians and professional cartographers suggested that the journal should include more content that was directly relevant to their work. Some of the more insightful offerings are reproduced here:

"NACIS membership includes not only cartographers but archivists, librarians, historians, educators, and so on. If *CP* included content that reflected its membership that would be helpful"

"Expansion of content related to maps that represents the map community and subscribers"

"The common thread among NACIS members is the appreciation of maps--how they function, their influence on society, as art, their history, etc. Keep the focus on the map itself."

"Given a choice of publishing something like "Lesser known Azimuthal Projections of the 20st Century" (with 47 footnotes, many distorted single-line projection silhouette maps) or "Cartography in Hiroshige's 1850's 'Road to Tokaido' woodblocks" (0 footnotes, lots of pretty woodblock illustrations) publish the latter."

"Keep things practical, yet imaginative and artistic!"

"Less academic, more practical. It has been the formula for success for the conference."

Another theme to emerge from the numerous comments was that the overall design of the journal should change. Some argued that the current design includes too much white space and a new design could make better use of the page space. Others questioned the thickness/type of paper used for producing the journal, its excessively large type size, and inclusion of margin quotes as ways to either reduce printing costs or change the overall appearance of the journal. Other suggestions asked if the color figures could be printed within each article rather than at the end of the issue.

There were a minority of individuals (two) who voiced a need to increase the frequency of *CP*'s publication. In fact, one of these individuals thought that they would "love to see a *CP* in my mailbox (or inbox) every other month." Some of the other less frequently recorded suggestions included paying higher dues to keep *CP* in publication three times a year, considering merging the various cartography journals into a single journal, and including advertising in the journal.

A number of individuals (nineteen) commented that they were pleased with the current state of *CP* and suggested that the journal should not change. One respondent enjoyed the "variety of articles that I can't read in any other publication regarding cartography" while another respondent said that *CP* is "a great publication representing a focused community of

"Keep the focus on the map itself."

"CP is "a great publication representing a focused community of professionals."

professionals . . . small enough to feel intimate while representing some of the best in the field."

DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

There is considerable food for thought that has been offered by NACIS members who responded to the editorial board's survey. The problem is to distill these suggestions into a workable plan that will meet the membership's desires for *CP*. It will be impossible to satisfy everyone and implement all of the suggestions. So, the problem of how to best steer *CP* on a navigable course through the waters of *CP*'s readership remains. Here, we discuss a few of the main issues that were raised and some possible ways of addressing these issues.

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Put *CP* Online

One of the more telling suggestions is to place *CP* online in some fashion. Given the digital age in which we now live, this is certainly a worthy criticism. As pointed out earlier, however, online means different things depending upon whom you ask. For instance, offering *CP* via the Web (e.g., in PDF format) could help to reduce printing costs, increase the frequency of issue offerings, reduce impacts on the environment, and allow individuals (both members and non-members) to have access to the wealth of information contained in the back issues. Placing *CP* online can also improve the journal's reputation and availability to a larger audience that may not be aware of what the journal offers. Granted, *CP*'s readership is rather small. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but since the NACIS members seem to like the idea of *CP* it would seem logical that others outside of the immediate NACIS community would also benefit from reading the journal. There is also the idea that moving the journal to an online environment may help draw in those map makers not in academia who may feel a bit marginalized by the current content and focus of the journal. We can report some positive steps that have already been taken to help address this general "online" direction that *CP* should take.

First, we are happy to say that back issues of *CP* are now freely available online in PDF format for downloading and viewing. Note though, that the NACIS Board did impose a two-year embargo on the journal's availability. Membership in NACIS does have its privileges. Placing back issues of *CP* online will help individuals who were frustrated that they don't have access to "such-and-such" an electronic database or a university library that subscribes to the journal. What's more, you don't have to be a member of NACIS to download any of *CP*'s back issues. However, it is hoped that non-members who visit the site will become interested enough in the more recent issues of *CP* and the organization to join.

Second, there is also a strong possibility that NACIS will soon manage CartoTalk. This hugely successful and popular Web environment has been an important component for the cartographic profession. Involving CartoTalk with NACIS can only help increase the awareness of *CP* beyond its current, relatively small readership. In more actively promoting *CP* within the realm of CartoTalk, it is hoped that a whole new audience that includes possible suppliers of *CP* content will emerge.

Finally, at the fall NACIS conference, a special all-digital version of *CP* will be announced. This special issue will serve as a model of what may become a regular, albeit separate, component of *CP*. This special issue will have a unique focus in that all of the content will highlight technical aspects of map making. So, there are no "research" oriented articles

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or theoretical pieces on obscure mapping practices of the Prussian Army. This special content issue may become an instant hit with *CP*'s readership.

Change *CP*'s Content

Another seemingly popular current of discussion was *CP*'s content. If you look back at the previous issues of *CP*, you will note that, while its primary focus has been on the peer-reviewed articles, its content has changed somewhat over the years. As with any journal, the ebb and flow of the membership's interests should be addressed and incorporated where appropriate. However, we find it difficult to reconcile the vast array of suggested changes to *CP*'s content that were expressed. On the one hand, there seemed to be a call for more research-oriented articles while at the same time fewer research articles were desired. Similarly, sentiment was expressed for a move away from empirical or theoretical articles in favor of more "practical" cartography articles. Of course, practical cartography has as many directions as placing the journal online. If you examine the first question from the survey as to what section of the journal is read most often, the Mapping Methods and Techniques is a clear winner, with the Cartographic Collections and Visual Fields coming in a distant second. The remaining sections are seemingly not as frequently read by NACIS members.

On the one hand, if the number of peer-reviewed articles is decreased in favor of expanding the other sections, *CP* would likely lose what little status it has in the academic community (and academics do look toward *CP* as a publication outlet for tenure and promotion). The number of peer-reviewed articles could remain constant, but an increase the number of pieces in the other sections is a possible consideration. However, this move would necessarily increase the page count and thus increase printing costs. There seems to be a consensus that membership would be willing to pay higher dues to help offset higher printing costs, so this may be a reasonable direction in which to take the publication. Of course, if the journal moves to being exclusively online (a move not unanimously supported by *CP*'s readership), then printing costs would be a moot point.

Speaking from the Editor's chair, I can report that submissions to the journal are very slim. At the time of writing this article, the number of peer-reviewed submissions is three (3). Yes, you read correctly, three. The most difficult section to pull content for is the Mapping Methods and Techniques. There are plausible explanations for this problem. As reported by the survey responses, there are other factors complicating this issue as well. For instance, those in professional cartographic circles often simply don't have the time to craft an article for this section, perceive themselves as not being particularly adept at writing, or do not necessarily want to give away their trade secrets. We would like to encourage those of you who believe that you don't do research to think about your work from a different perspective. Do you ever have a difficult technical or design problem to solve? If you have come up with a solution, then you likely have done some research, and it is likely that your solution would make an excellent contribution to the Mapping Methods and Techniques section. If you do not feel confident about your writing skills or don't have the time to complete an entire submission on your own, why not team up with another NACIS member to work on your ideas together? A fantastic place to start such a partnership might be at the annual NACIS conference!

Another possible explanation for our difficulty in finding Mapping Methods and Techniques submissions is that material for this section is comprised of timely advice for software products. As we all know, soft-

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ware goes through changes at an accelerated pace, which means that timeliness in getting the technique to those in need is of the utmost importance. In the current queue, an article submitted for the Mapping Methods and Techniques section normally takes six months or longer to go to print. If this special all-digital issue of *CP* is successful and can maintain some kind of longevity, perhaps this environment would be a better place for the technique-oriented pieces than the print journal.

If the Mapping Methods and Techniques section moves from the print issue to the all digital version, what would replace this void? The survey seemed to offer some insightful ideas here. One suggestion that seemed plausible was to include a section that focused on cartography students. This could include a recent project/map upon which they worked, an explanation of a research project, or perhaps a summation of an interesting internship experience in which a student was employed. Currently, there is nothing unique that *CP* offers to students. What would be a better way to showcase the talents of students for all to see than a special section in the journal? Another suggested section was to showcase or highlight various mapping companies and some of the employees who work there. This would be an interesting way for everyone in mapping profession to learn a bit more about one another and what makes their approach to mapping special.

CONCLUSIONS

In January 2009 an email was sent out to the NACIS membership asking for their participation in a survey on *CP*. The survey's purpose was to determine people's opinions about *CP* and what its future may hold. While the opinions expressed varied considerably, the main thrust of the survey results suggests that *CP* needs to change. Among the types of 'change' reported was a strong opinion that *CP* needs to have an online presence. As you may be aware, the print industry is reeling under the pressure from the web and other digital devices that offer access and delivery of information. In some cases, journals have offered a mixture of print and online offerings to its readership. In other cases, journals have done away with the print side completely and delivered its content exclusively online. In some respects, the issue of web delivery and accessibility has been addressed. A digital archive of older *CP* issues is now freely available to anyone simply by visiting the NACIS website. However, there is a two-year embargo on posting current issues. Obviously, more work on merging the print version of *CP* with the digital services that the web offers has yet to occur. Another strong sentiment expressed by the survey respondents was to change the contents of *CP*. Some wanted more topics that focused on the technical aspects or "hands-on" of using software to make maps. Others wanted to simply see more maps in the journal. Addressing these issues will take some time and involve discussion with the NACIS membership to decide how best to implement these and other changes voiced in the survey results.

Aside from these issues, one overriding problem remains: Submissions. As of this writing, *CP* has received three (3) articles since the start of 2009. At this current pace, *CP*'s publication schedule is going to lag and the vitality of the journal will surely falter. The readership survey did address the issue of submissions to *CP* and the responses did prove to be a mixed bag of sorts. On the one hand, the survey reported that a high percentage of respondents would consider submitting something to *CP* for publication consideration. However, only one-third of the respondents have in fact submitted something to *CP* for publication consideration. It is clear

that the bulk of submissions to the journal do not necessarily come from the NACIS community. The question remains what is needed to increase submissions? Will changing *CP*'s content to reflect the interests of the journal's readership result in a renewed submission vigor? If *CP* can better integrate with the web, then will this ensure the journal's vitality? It is likely that none of these singular approaches will be the cure-all. Rather, it is more probable that some combination of these solutions and other possibilities that will see to restoring the long-term health of the journal.

¹The number in parentheses indicates the number of responses received in each category.

NOTES