

Questionnaire for Board Candidates

2011 Candidate Questions

- **Name:**
Steve Gibbard
- **Provide a brief biography of recent experience, associations, and affiliations relevant to serving on the NANOG Board of Directors. Please be as specific as possible:**

I'm NANOG's membership chair, and before that wrote NANOG's bylaws as chair of the NewNOG governance committee. I was one of the authors of the NANOG Reform document, calling for NANOG's self-governance in 2004, and was one of the authors of the Merit NANOG Charter in 2005.

When not doing NANOG work (which is most of the time, fortunately), I'm the Network Architect at Nominum, a DNS company. I work on network infrastructure to support hosted DNS-related services. I grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan (just like NANOG), and now live in Oakland, California, with my wife, Harriet, and our dog, Sophie.

I've been doing network engineering since 1996. In my early years at a local dial-up ISP in Detroit, I found the NANOG mailing list to be an amazing resource for learning about the industry and keeping up with current events that impacted my job (largely fiber cuts, which happened a lot back then). I attended my first NANOG meeting in 2000, and again found myself awash in useful information. I got to know the people I needed to talk to to get things done on the Internet. I found a great community.

In the ensuing eleven years, through contacts made at NANOG, I've worked on network projects all over the world, and been able to participate in regional operations forums on several continents. NANOG remains my home operations group, however, and I'd like to continue helping to guide it into the future.

- **Describe the relevance of your technical and professional experience to serve on the Board of Directors:**

I've been involved in NANOG governance off and on for several years. I've been involved with other non-profit networking organizations, both as a staff member (Packet Clearing House, <http://www.pch.net>) and as a board member (Cyberspace Communications, Inc., <http://www.cyberspace.org>). I've run a small consulting business, which made enough money for me to live on for a few years.

- **What Internet-related services do you or your current employer or organization provide:**

We run a hosted DNS network, and provide DNS software to several large broadband providers.

- **Are there any conflicts real or perceived that might arise should you be elected as a NANOG Board Member:**

Not that I can think of.

- **Describe any concerns or limitations on your ability to participate or travel to attend Board Meetings and NANOG Meetings in person or to serve the entirety of a 2-year term:**

I've attended all but two or three NANOGs in the last eleven years. That seems kind of excessive, thinking back on it, but I should be able to keep it up for a few years more.

I should note that I will be missing at least part of the upcoming Philadelphia meeting, where you'll be voting on this, because it conflicts with the wedding of some close friends. But, hopefully they'll only get married once.

- **What differentiates you as a candidate, or makes you uniquely suited to serve on the NANOG Board of Directors:**

Please see single response question below.

- **Why do you want to serve on the NANOG Board:**

Please see single response question below.

- **What do you want to accomplish during your tenure on the board? And, describe how you expect to accomplish that goal:**

Please see single response question below.

- **Describe the level of relevance NANOG has to its membership, and the larger community:**

Please see single response question below.

- **What are NANOG's greatest achievements in the last year:**

I'm going to group the last five questions into a single response.

The current NANOG board has taken the organization through a period of great change over the last two years. They've done a very impressive job of converting NANOG from an "activity" of a university consortium into an independent industry organization, with minimal disruption. I'm running only because Steve Feldman, NANOG's chair throughout that period, isn't. I hope the members will reelect incumbents Sylvie LaPerriere, Mike Smith, and Duane Wessels, before thinking about casting their fourth vote for me. I want them to continue doing the job they've been doing.

That said, doing two years of work to bring the organization through a dramatic change in governance structure would be rather disappointing if it stopped there. NANOG has put on good conferences, and will continue to do so. What's exciting about our new structure is that it will allow us to do more. Many of our counterpart organizations

elsewhere in the world have workshop programs to train the next generation of network engineers. It would be nice to do something like that here. I'd like to see NANOG support the best practices documentation work Aaron Hughes proposed at the Atlanta meeting a year ago. I'd like people setting up topic-specific network operations mailing lists – the various router-nsp lists, the security lists, the outages list, for example – to be able to use NANOG's mailing list infrastructure rather than having to set up their own. In general, I'd like to see NANOG become a full-fledged professional organization for the network operations community, rather than an organization that runs a few big meetings and leaves the community to set up duplicate infrastructure for everything else.

- **What are NANOG's three greatest challenges and how do you see the Board addressing them?**

The greatest challenge for any organization is to not run out of money. If you do that, it's game over. Fortunately, our community has been very excited about supporting the new NANOG, and between that and the hard work of our Development Committee, money has been coming in exceeding the expectations we went into this with. If we can keep the organization relevant, and not spend extravagantly, the money part should come out ok.

Keeping the meetings running smoothly without their former organizers also seemed like a significant challenge. I think we now have the right staff to make that happen, so that seems like less of a challenge than it once did.

The remaining challenges have to do with maintaining our relevance and expanding into new areas, without overreaching and damaging our existing programs. Things like building new training programs will be a lot of work in themselves, and doing them without taking resources away from our established conference and mailing list activities will be a greater challenge.

The board has several parts to play in this. The board sets the vision. The board makes sure we're adequately staffed. The board has the organizational relationship with the community and reaches out to community volunteers. The board leads by example by doing a lot of volunteer work itself. But, most importantly, the board has to provide supervision, to track where the money and the staff resources are going, and make sure that implementing the new parts of the vision don't damage the organization's established functions.