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## Golden Commentary: 2013 tech trends for associations

By MARK J. GOLDEN, FASAE, CAE | 01/31/2013



It's that time of year, so here are *my* picks for the three biggest trends affecting associations for 2013.

**1. It's not just social – or even primarily social – it's all about mobile access now.** While some associations are doing a better job of it than others, virtually all are now engaged in social media. But has this attention to social come at the expense of needed attention to their web pages and the changing nature of member interactions with the web?

I have found many associations that offers a stylish and stunning website, with clear and intuitive navigation, and access to a wealth of current and useful information when I was sitting at my desk. Returning to the same site using the browser on my phone, that website is less than useless.

So my first suggested New Year's resolution for associations is to test-drive your own website often and do it from a smartphone. Then apply ASAE CIO Reggie Henry's website road-test: What is it that members come to your website to do most often? Get news? Register for events? Whatever the answers are for your particular association, how easy is it for a user to perform these functions using only the thumb of one hand and a phone-sized display?

**2. If you are a control freak, get over it.** The once all-powerful and centralized IT department that controlled who in the organization got what technology and when is a thing of the past. Even before you start factoring in volunteers, who remain outside of your scope of management control, what association isn't having to cope with staff who bring a variety of personal smartphones, tablets, laptops and software solutions to the office and expect them to integrate seamlessly? (And how often does your staff bring more up-to-date and powerful technology to the office than the association itself provides?)

But more than BYOD ("bring your own device"), increasingly the challenge is BYOC ("bring your own cloud"): volunteers, committees, even staff working groups setting up their own, isolated and independently controlled Dropbox or Google Docs space to manage projects. This is no doubt contributing much to the goal of increased ease of engagement and productivity, but it can undermine one of the association's fundamental goals: ensuring that everyone, everywhere in the organization is working from the most current, complete an accurate info available. Heck, even simple issues of document version control can become a nightmare!

**3. If you still think IT is somebody else's responsibility, you're wrong.** But there is another impact from the decentralization of IT: the imperative for each staff member to recognize that every project, department and activity has technology implications, and it's their responsibility to think about that. Every project, department and activity budget needs to include an IT factor, accounting both for dollars and for management time and attention; which means that every person and department needs to be IT savvy and IT accountable.

Golden is the former executive director of the National Court Reporters Association and a past chairman of the ASAE Foundation. "Golden Commentary" is a monthly column he writes about current trends and news regarding the association community. Contact him at [mjgolden@cox.net](mailto:mjgolden@cox.net).

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