

Servas Online Senior Resource Person Panel [[draft]]

This draft is a guide for the Senior Resource Panel for Servas Online.

1. Role of the Panel
2. Outline of Panel's report to GA
3. Prototype schedule (subject to change)
4. Selected private correspondence from two national secretaries on ServasOnline and Servas futures
5. Questions for the Resource Panel
6. Advice to the Resource Person Panel
7. Set up of the Panel

1.Role: The Resource Panel is advisory, positive and helpful.

- The Resource Panel prepares recommendations on Servas Online to GA in consultation with national groups and others.
- It will complete its work by October-November, 2011. Some of its recommendations could be implemented before the GA, and others would be sent to the GA for for decision.

2. (Draft Outline) Report to General Assembly

1. **Purpose** of the Servas Online project reviewed
2. Summary of Reviewer and user **Comments**
3. **Status of Use Cases**
4. **Features** of Servas Online prototype most valued
5. **Success stories** in using Servas Online: hosts, travelers, interviewers, host list coordinators, peace secretaries
6. **Costs/ savings** in using Servas Online: summary of inputs from countries
7. **Savings of volunteer time** in using Servas Online
8. **New procedure** and responsibilities for online interviews for Servas Online
9. Changing Roles of the **International and national host list coordinators**
10. **Interviewers roles** for Servas Online
11. What **Training and orientation** is required by national groups for adopting Servas Online
12. What groups **need help and how** can they get help
13. **Data Security**
14. Question of a **Common Membership fee** – national or international
15. How is Servas Online raising **Servas Profile**
16. **Promotion and outreach**
17. **Look and feel** of Servas Online
18. Is Servas Online effective in **advancing Servas growth**, reducing Servas decline
19. Should Servas serve **other groups** with hospitality exchange and friendship/peacebuilding services
20. **Next phases, costs, benefits, features**
21. **Practical decisions**
22. **Summary of recommendations** to General Assembly

3) Servas Online Prototype Development Schedule

Activity	Date	Remarks
Prototype with dummy data available to EXCO for review and comments.	10 April, 2011	It would help if some real data is made available to Mathew so that he does not have to spend his time on generating dummy data.
Review and comments by EXCO.	10 May, 2011	
Incorporation of EXCO's comments and revised model with real data available for review by EXCO.	15 June, 2011	EXCO will arrange for a dump of Dolphin database to be made available to Mathew by 10 May, 2011.
Second review and comments by EXCO.	15 July, 2011	
Revised prototype incorporating EXCO's comments available for testing by EXCO and Steering Committee.	15 August, 2011 ?????	Depends on Mathew's availability.
Comments by Steering Committee	15 September, 2011	
Incorporation of Steering Committee's comments and launch of Servas Online.	31 October, 2011 ??????	Depends on Mathew's availability. It may not be possible to incorporate all comments of Steering Committee by this date if they require drastic changes in design or additional features to be incorporated.

4. Servas Futures and Servas Online

The following two items are private letters from two national secretaries of large Servas groups in Western Europe. The letters point to opportunities and issues facing Servas by Servas Online. As the letters are private, we have removed references. (The authors may change their minds or improve their thinking.) The Senior Resource Panel can consider the issues raised by these two leaders and find ways ahead.

4a) Letter : Just a quick feedback to the propositions of [friendly neighbouring Servas group]

How or whether and under what conditions.....” to make the whole host lists accessible for all Servas travellers and hosts worldwide as a pdf file, even with a specific electronic security, and although ... [national] .. legislation would not be violated by this solution with appropriate security measures!

Personnaly I woud not be against this idea but given the average age of our members and the current composition of my board, this idea would be (and has already been actually) rejected.

Re the problem of income and lack of volunteers, I think that I've already underlined that for [our Servas group] , the biggest problem remains the lack of volunteers. As soon as Exco validates a technical solution, the financial problems can be solved. I'm sure some countries would be eager - or at least ready - to give more money for this vital project. I bet [our group] would be ready but I need a formal vote of my GA and I also need to be sure the money would be fully spent for Servas Online. By the way, we have our annual GA mid-June and if there's something new for Servas Online, please don't hesitate to warn me so that I can call for a vote.

Re the idea of a fee for the whole membership, allowing the member to be host and traveller for one year, it's an interesting proposition. However:

- 1) I suppose each country would decide the amount of its own unique contribution? Otherwise it wouldn't be possible. The membership fee in France is twice higher than in Germany, and the German one is also higher than in many coutries like Russia, aso. In any case, if this solution is validated by the next GA or by a distant vote, I need to quickly assess this change
- 2) I would agree with this idea after that I'm sure Servas Online will be successful.

I'm still eager to find solutions for Servas Online. I hope ... volunteers are still interested in the project. Many ... members regularly ask me or members of my board which step has already been reached. I try ...

.....

4b) Letter: my thoughts about different ideas and what's going on concerning Servas Online.

Believe me – I can see the point that makes it necessary to talk and think about new ways. We may, however, not forget that the General Assembly didn't leave us without requirements

Let me start with some good news. The mail that was sent to all members [...] led to some very positive and interesting reaction by people who would like to get involved and give time and energy to the Servas Online project! ...

... would never agree to make the host lists accessable for all Servas travellers and hosts worldwide! First of all: this would be totally against the decisions of the GA! The lists contain personal data that may in no case be made visible to others on the internet. Like telephone numbers, full addresses etc. I talked about this to two other national secretaries of bigger countries, and I am quite sure that neither of them would agree upon that. And even if the boards

would – the members wouldn't ... Again: in that case we would ignore the vote of the GA with such a decision.

Which would leave us to the question, whether we should put the whole thing into professional hands or make a new effort to find a way for ourselves. There are people who believe that we could never do without professional help, as the whole thing is so complex... Others believe that with a sufficient amount of volunteers it should work. ...

I'm convinced, however, that something good will come out of our recent activities, and we'd surely love to send one of [our member group's] hopefully new Online-Group as a representative to a new Steering Committee!!

There was another part of your e-mail that I fully agree upon, and this is about the need to "reduce complexity", as you called it. .. how difficult it will be to harmonize certain things, but it is worth trying anyway!

These are my ideas:

1. In the future it should be possible for any Servas member with access to the internet to write, make changes to, renew etc. his Lol. So that if he/she wants to travel, the person in charge just has to print it out, put a stamp on it and send it to the traveller – after having made sure that this person is still a member and paid his/her annual fee (see point 2).
2. There could be only one fee for the whole membership, allowing the member to be host and traveller for one year. You have to renew your membership once a year by paying the fee. This would mean: No coordinator or whoever is in charge would have to wait for the money for the Lol etc.
3. But what about the stamp fee that goes to Servas International?
This problem could easily be solved, I'm sure. As an example ... it would be sufficient to pay the fee we usually hand over to SI. Plus another advantage: As the decline of travellers is more significant than the decline of hosts (we hope for the contrary anyway, when SOL works), the calculation for SI would be much more secure! And again: it would relieve the persons in charge from taking care of the fee for every single Lol.
- 4... There remains, however, the question what to do with the countries that are very small and can't perhaps handle things the way I mentioned. And what about the amount of free stamps etc.? But I'm sure this is not a major problem. And if the majority of the countries get started then it could be one first step – also concerning the financial situation of Servas International!

I know these are only some thoughts that would have to be discussed, especially as it comes to the question how they could be put into practice. But you were asking for thoughts and ideas – this is what I can offer at the moment. Let me, please, add that I'd be more than happy to help with what I can .. These were just my "personal" thoughts, it is not an "official" letter!

5. Questions: for Servas Senior Resource Panel on Servas Online

Specific Questions

- What common, priority needs to be met by Servas Online sooner than later (see Use Cases)
- What other needs can be delayed until later, e.g. 2012
- What issues and needs and tensions can be reduced or eliminated by Servas Online e.g. distribution of expensive host directories
- What traditional procedures must change, if any, to move from paper to Servas Online
- what risks are identified; what protection is needed and is enough protection in place
- When can some Servas Groups go online, using the Servas Prototype soon?
- When and under what conditions can Servas Groups be identified as having capacity and proper, reliable procedures to go online
- When can Servas group data be entered into the Servas Online and by whom
- Who will review and report on the success of Servas Online, for participating groups and groups of groups
- Who needs training or orientation in Servas Online and when – is certifying competence and capacity a pre-condition to go online?
- How should the Host List Coordinator job change in the Statutes to support Servas Online?

General Questions:

- How to avoid disruption to traditional hosts and travelers while encouraging new “members” at the national or regional and international levels?
- How to ensure an appropriate look and feel of Servas online presentation consistent with its Dedication?
- How to continue service to paper based Servas member groups and individuals?
- How to use the opportunities provided by national and international meetings in 2011 and 2012, including the General Assembly, to advance Servas transition and uptake of Servas Online?
- How to use Servas Online to reduce member group costs, avoid volunteer burn-out
- How to use Servas Online to make Servas attractive, exciting, fun and a genuine force for Peacebuilding?
- What organizational changes are needed to plan and maintain and operate Servas Online?
- Servas-wide Cost-Revenue aspects; Servas growth or decline.

Hopes:

Servas Online may transform Servas. We can all hope, and look for the common good among national groups while helping advance a Servas Online project which will be transformative, beneficial and practical., e.g.

1. how people and groups in the Servas network relate to each other?
2. the role of national groups as more or less important in a Servas Online world?
3. reinforcing Servas in its dedication to Peacebuilding?
4. delivering a new source of energy and membership?

6. Advice to the Resource Person Panel

- Participate in and get to know the Servas Online prototype, and
- Give advice to the GA and others.
- Do not give orders to the Technical Developer or other groups.
- Get input from Reviewers and others
- Act supportively to all.
- Consult broadly on successful outcomes, anticipated risks, resource requirements, strategy, budget, user procedures and budget.
- contact national groups and others (cooperatively with technical developers and reviewers) so as to: promote and guide helpful workshops, recommendations, report and advice on Budget and next steps, etc.
- Do not duplicate the work of others, nor to set up a new Servas administrative activity, but to witness, advise on and encourage work and dedication by others.

What advice and Help needed from the Panel:

- Act as a resource-panel of informants and advisors
- Consult and inform as many national groups as possible on options and next steps for adopting and ramping up Servas Online, so as to serve the member groups and individual hosts, travelers and helpers
- Review use-needs and discuss “user-case statements” [with John Gunther]
- Advocate for the whole of Servas and its mission as a Peace-building network as the Servas Online project goes forward
- Monitor and understand data security provisions
- Advice on policy conditions -- when national data should be entered into Servas Online data base
- Consider specific procedures required for Member Groups to serve the Servas Online system and how to assure member group capacity and compliance
- Receive and evaluate input from Reviewers network*
- Consider training and orientation needs and means for big, medium and small groups and interviewers
- Identify gaps, shortfalls, requiring extra attention
- Consider needs of smaller groups who are not part of the levy, and may not do online interviews
- Consider needs of individuals and groups who desire or may need to work from paper systems

7.Set up of the Panel

Structure of the Panel: a few interested senior national member-group leaders working jointly

Skills needed: teamwork, broad and deep knowledge of Servas community; good communications; ability to consult broadly and make recommendations.

Number: To be effective the group should be 7 or fewer, but the Senior Panel may invite others as consultants or as resource persons who could provide input and reflect the diversity and depth of Servas.

Mix:

- Reflect both Europe and the Americas (North and South) as the heaviest Internet users
- Include at least some Levy member groups and a couple of developing (non-Levy groups)
- Invite advance inputs when possible, so that many who are interested can inform and share.
- Working language: English

Other: Several review have volunteered to inspect the Servas Online prototype*

Chair: chosen by the group

Term: To December 2011, so that a report can be developed which can be sent to members of the General Assembly and revised before the GA meets in 2012.

Meetings: In case participants cannot all meet physically, some meeting scan be by Video Skype or other means. Some meetings could be held during national meetings, virtually or physically[??]

Time Required: One or two meetings per month. An hour or so, to prepare and debrief from each meeting . Some members of the Panel can work on specialized matters and share at the meetings. The idea is not however to become so technical that lay persons cannot understand.

Copies:

- Phyllis Chinn
- Jonny Saganger
- Sheldon Weeks
- Pablo Colangelo
- Rodolfo Alvarado Castañeda
- Thomas Thomas
- John Gunter