NOG in a Box
So you want to start a NOG?

Vincent Celindro
and
Tom Kacprzynski
Speakers Intros

Tom Kacprzynski
- CHI-NOG Original Organizer (2013-present)
- CHI-NOG Program Committee Chair (2013-present)
- NANOG Program Committee (2018-present)
- OPEN-IX Various Committees (past)
- Over 18 years of network industry experience
- Currently a Sr. Director at Oracle

Vincent Celindro
- NANOG Board of Directors (2021-present)
- NANOG Program Committee (2018-2020)
- CHI-NOG Program Committee (2018-present)
- Over 20 years of Industry Experience
  - Northwestern University - AS103
  - Dell - Open Networking
  - Juniper Networks - SE/SEM/CSE
    - Currently - Senior Account Manager
You are at NANOG, why start a NOG?
Overview

- Reasons (!to|to) start a NOG?
- What is a NOG?
- Who should start a NOG?
- Use case: CHI-NOG
- Where to Start?
- Building a Local Community
- First Community Meeting
- Growing Phases
- NOG Blueprint Program
Reasons not to start a NOG

- Monetary
- Self Promotion
- Market products
- Sales

If those are your reasons:

It’s going to be hard to build a true community

Everyone will see through it

We are surrounded by marketing content everywhere and that’s why people are looking for something else
Why start a NOG?

Build a community of like minded people working in the network industry

Allows you to define your own community based on:

- Geographic (City, Region)
- Type (CDN NOG, Cloud NOG, Utilities, Enterprise ...etc)
- Any other shared commonality

Smaller size, more intimate, more focused, less intimidating and easier to connect locally
Why start a NOG?

Learn best practices, new technologies and trends from each other and industry experts

Help build the social network behind the ‘networks’

Mentor, grow, collaborate, and have a sense of a community
What is a NOG?

Internet network operators' groups (NOGs) are informal, country-based, or regional groups that exist to provide forums for Internet network operators to discuss matters of mutual interest, usually through a combination of mailing lists and annual conferences. Although these groups have no formal power, their members are typically influential members of the Internet service provider (ISP), Internet exchange point (IXP), regional Internet registry (RIR), operational security community, Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) operations, Domain Name System (DNS) and root zone operations, and other network operations communities, and discussions within these groups are often influential in the overall process of ensuring the Internet remains operational, robust, secure, and stable. They also allow networking professionals and other members of the research and technical communities to update each other on their work, share news and updates, exchange best practices, discuss new technologies or protocols, teach and learn from each other, network with other members of the community, and discuss current network- and Internet-related issues and challenges.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_network_operators%27_group
Who should start a NOG?

Look in the mirror...

- Service Provider
  - Large Scale
- Enterprise
  - Campuses
  - WFH
- Gaming
  - CA
  - Low Latency
  - Security
- Financials
  - NYC, CHI, LA
  - Low Latency
  - Security
- Utilities
  - Industrial
  - IT/OT
  - Security
- CDN
Use case: CHI-NOG

- Chicago Network Operators Group
- Started in 2013
- Who started it?
  - Tom Kacprzynski
  - Brian McGahan
  - Jason Craft
- How did the idea come about?
- Meetings throughout the years ->
- Challenges
  - Building the momentum
  - Funding
  - Finding venues
- Covid-19 impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 01</td>
<td>Sep 4, 2013</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Informal meeting to start off the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 02</td>
<td>Mar 14, 2014</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meetup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 03</td>
<td>Jun 14, 2014</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meetup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 04</td>
<td>Oct 9, 2014</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meetup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 05</td>
<td>May 14, 2015</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Full-Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 06</td>
<td>May 12, 2016</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Full-Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 07</td>
<td>May 18, 2017</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Full-Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 08</td>
<td>May 10, 2018</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Full-Day (afternoon 2 tracks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHI-NOG 09</td>
<td>May 23, 2019</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Full-Day (afternoon 2 tracks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use Case: CHI-NOG

- Currently
  - One annual event
  - Attendance ~200
  - ~16 speakers, two tracks
  - ~11 sponsors
  - Vendor neutral content
  - Every event starts with general program and ends with a social event
  - All sessions recorded

- How are we organized?
  - Program Committee
    - 4 Members
  - Executive Role
    - Funding/sponsorship/contracts/media
  - Employ Event Management Company
    - Assists with venue and speaker mgmt
Where to start?

What does it take to start a NOG?

1. 2 to 3 dedicated organizers
2. Schedule first planning meeting for organizers
3. Establish key principle to follow
   a. Present vendor neutral content
   b. Seek to educate rather than market products
4. Setup online presence
   - Wordpress site
   - Twitter handle
   - LinkedIn Group
   - Youtube channel
   - Slack
5. Start building a local community spreading the word of the new group
Building a Local Community

How do you build a local community?

- This is the majority of the groundwork for the organizers
- Ask coworker and former colleagues
- Seek out people via social/professional websites to invite them to the meetings
- Get help from already established national organization
- Announce the event in technical groups like mailing lists
- Ask sponsors for help advertising the event
- Search based on technical certifications or professional titles
- Reach out to local universities

Building the local community is one of the hardest parts at first of organizing a local NOG but most rewarding

It will take creativity but will slowly grow and build momentum
First Community Meeting

- First meeting just to get started and announce the group
- It’s very informal
- Usually small around 10 people
- Meet and greet anyone that’s interested
- Get feedback on the direction of the group
- Gather ideas
- Brainstorming content for next meeting
  - Watching party - videos of other conferences
  - Ask for local speaker to volunteer
  - Get a good idea of the audience
    - SP, Enterprise, Cloud
- It’s also a good place to look for volunteers

Don’t forget to celebrate accomplishing the first step, as it gains momentum
Growing Phases

NOGs might follow these growth phase:

1. Meetup Phase
2. Full-Day Conference Phase
3. Multi-Day Conference Phase

Most local NOGs will be successful in the meetup phase.
## Meetups Phase

### Growing Phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Up to 3 presentations (live or recorded) with dedicated networking time Organizers will have to seek out presenters Events are held during weekday in evenings after work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Venue</td>
<td>Office conference room University halls or library rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>20 to 40 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Informal but structured (schedule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Pizza and beer (&lt;$200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors</td>
<td>Not needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Three times a year to build community momentum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Full-Day Conference Phase  
**Growing Phases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Ten to twelve live speakers, single track or split track in the afternoon. Outside of organizers reaching out to speakers, use Call for Presentations to attract speakers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Venue</td>
<td>Hotel Conference Rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>50 to 200 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Formal and Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Significant venue costs consisting of food, beverages, room rental, AV (~$50K-100K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors</td>
<td>Need a structured sponsorship packages to cover costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Once a year, since organizationally it's a lot of planning. You can outsource event planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization

More formal functions of the organization to consider with growth:

1. Program Committee
   a. Call for Presentations
   b. Responsible for content/speakers selection
   c. Ensuring content is vendor neutral
   d. Overall program of the event
2. Marketing
   a. Announcing events and marketing the group for others to know about
   b. Social media outreach
3. Finance/Budget
   a. Dealing with all costs and finances of the group/events
   b. Covering the cost of operating the event and organization
4. Sponsor Development
   a. Working on sponsorship packages
   b. Attracting event sponsors

Initially all of these can be done by the main organizers, but as the group grows these functions will need to break out into committees or outsourced to event planning companies.
Full-Day Conference Phase

Growing Phases

Legal Entity

- LLC - Limited Liability Company
- 501(c)(3) - Non profit

Funding

- Sponsorship Packages
  - Fund majority of the event
  - Different levels {Diamond | Gold | Silver .. etc}
  - Clearly defined rules for benefits
  - Separate from presented content

- Ticket Sales
  - Amount big enough to ensure attendees show up, but low enough to ensure everyone can attend
# Multi-Day Conference Phase

**Growing Phases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Multiple tracks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Venue</td>
<td>Large Hotel Conference rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>200+ Attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Formal and Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>More than 1 day event, plus room rental blocks &gt;$100K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors</td>
<td>Same as 1 day event, but need to raise more money to cover costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Once a year to 3 times a year Hire staff or outsource it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOG Blueprint

CHI-NOG is piloting a NOG blueprint program

- Objective is to help other organizers get started within their community
- The goal is to provide a written blueprint for local organizers at the end of the pilot
- We would like to provide experience and guidance
- Grow the networking community reaching the local levels
- Would like to setup a meeting at the next in-person NANOG for interested organizers
- We are working with NANOG to see where we can collaborate

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Looking for community organizers who want to start their local NOG

Contact us at: local-nogs@chinog.org
Summary

- Reasons (!to|to) start a NOG?
- What is a NOG?
- Why & Who should start a NOG?
- Use case: CHI-NOG
- Where to start?
- Building a Local Community
- First Community Meeting
- Growing Phases
  - Meetup
  - Full-Day
  - Multi-Day
- NOG Blueprint Program
Questions?