



To: H-Net Council
From: Peter Knupfer, Executive Director
Date: October 23, 2008
Subject: Executive Director Annual Report

This year, the first of my new term as Executive Director, has been one of substantive progress for our organization. We have completed work on the largest programming effort since we instituted the Job Guide's online interface eight years ago, added a new editorial category of teaching editor (the first since we added "web" editors many moons ago), welcomed several innovative networks to our family of scholarly communities, and are entering a period of national economic uncertainty with a strong cash balance, well-positioned to address significant technical and policy issues that face us.

I am happy to report that H-Net's financial and administrative condition continues to improve. We still have many significant issues to face concerning our future funding, content development, and essential programming tasks. I do believe that, as I said here last year, the organization is at a crossroads concerning what path it wishes to take as it enters a period of intense technological change. Our greatest assets -- the editors and the vast audiences they serve -- will remain our most important strength as we move forward and make those critical decisions.

The subscription and listserv activity trends I reported last year continue this year. We attract new subscribers, networks, and reviewers, but at a slightly lower *rate* than the previous fiscal year. During the reporting period we launched 3 new networks, certified 27 (83 the previous year) new advisory board members and 83 (86) new editors. We have 123,743 unique subscription addresses, about 9,000 more than last year, but postings continue their downward trend to an average of 8727 per month from 2000 to the present.

At the end of the reporting period, in July 2008, we were fully immersed in designing and coding the new online workflow system for our Reviews project. The programming was completed in August, we launched the beta in September, and reviews are now being published under this new system. The design team -- overseen by Associate Director Heather Hawley, and including programmer Ronald Nussbaum, Vice President Ian Binnington, Reviews Associate Editor Patricia Rogers and her copyediting staff, and system administrator Dennis Boone -- continues to monitor the system, fix bugs, and refine the service. A number of our review editors provided critical guidance in this process, pinpointing issues with the interface, functionality, and design of the system, which is much the better for their efforts. The completion of our new Reviews system allows us to turn our attention to other services in need of upgrading and updating, a challenge that the Council hopes to launch at its business meeting this year.

During the reporting period the teaching committee under the able leadership of Trevor Getz and acting in response to requests from the editorial community, fleshed out the basic position description for a new Teaching Editor position, to be added to the categories of Web Editor, List Editor, and Review Editor, that require certification by the H-Net Council. Teaching editors will be charged by networks with specific teaching-related tasks, including managing teaching features on the lists, collecting new teaching materials, coordinating collaboration on teaching-oriented projects, and overseeing databases of those materials. President-elect Kelly Woestman and H-TAH editor Rachel Ragland worked very closely with our partners at the Organization of American Historians to organize and our third annual Teaching American History symposium at the OAH annual meeting. Once again the symposium attracted a large and eager crowd, this time to hear award-winning historian Carol Berkin discuss "What I Learned from Your Teachers," the very heart of the symposium's effort to determine how professional development programs for teachers can also have beneficial training effects for the historical profession.

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H-Net is a 501c (3) nonprofit organization.

Thanks to Vice President Matthew Gilmore, we welcomed several new networks this past year. H-FEDHIST, of the venerable Society for History of the Federal Government; H-TLH, on Research on Teaching and Learning History; and H-CITIZENSHIP, on citizenship studies, strengthen both the depth and the cross-disciplinarity of our networks.

Despite the current economic turmoil, H-Net's fiscal condition continues to improve; revenues are up and we are able to invest more in staff and computing resources. We have added copyeditors to Reviews and clerks to the staff to handle the rising demand for that service. Revenues from our Job Guide continue to increase, rising to \$182,213 (2381 paid notices) from \$148,800. Donations during the same period were \$44,767, slightly lower than \$45,982 the previous year. Projections for our revenues are promising, but they continue to suggest caution about overreliance upon a single revenue source, the Job Guide, which is itself a hostage to changing market conditions.

As I forecast last year, H-Net and MATRIX moved out of their offices in the historic auditorium building during June and July of this year, just as we were ramping up the coding of the Reviews system. H-Net returned to its headquarters space from 1997, in 8A Morrill Hall, under the auspices of the History Department, while MATRIX moved into newly-refurbished offices in the Natural Sciences building on the campus. The move required us to pack, unpack, and reorganize thousands of books and set ourselves up in space that is similar in size to our previous digs, but still a squeeze for the clerks, the Associate Director, and our equipment. I closed my auditorium office and combined it with my existing space in History. We will continue to negotiate a hosting agreement with the History Department, and space will be on the agenda for that agreement.

I would like in particular to express my gratitude to Past President Kriste Lindenmeyer, whose term ends on December 31, for her leadership and veteran counsel during her terms as an officer and a member of our governing council. Kris hails from H-Net's founding generation and has worked tirelessly to keep us focused on the practical and enduring mission of building communities of practice by attending to the interests and needs of our core constituencies: small professional organizations, junior scholars and graduate students, and teachers at all levels.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Knupfer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Knupfer
Executive Director