

The Future of User Groups

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The Microsoft®
Mindshare Program

Agenda

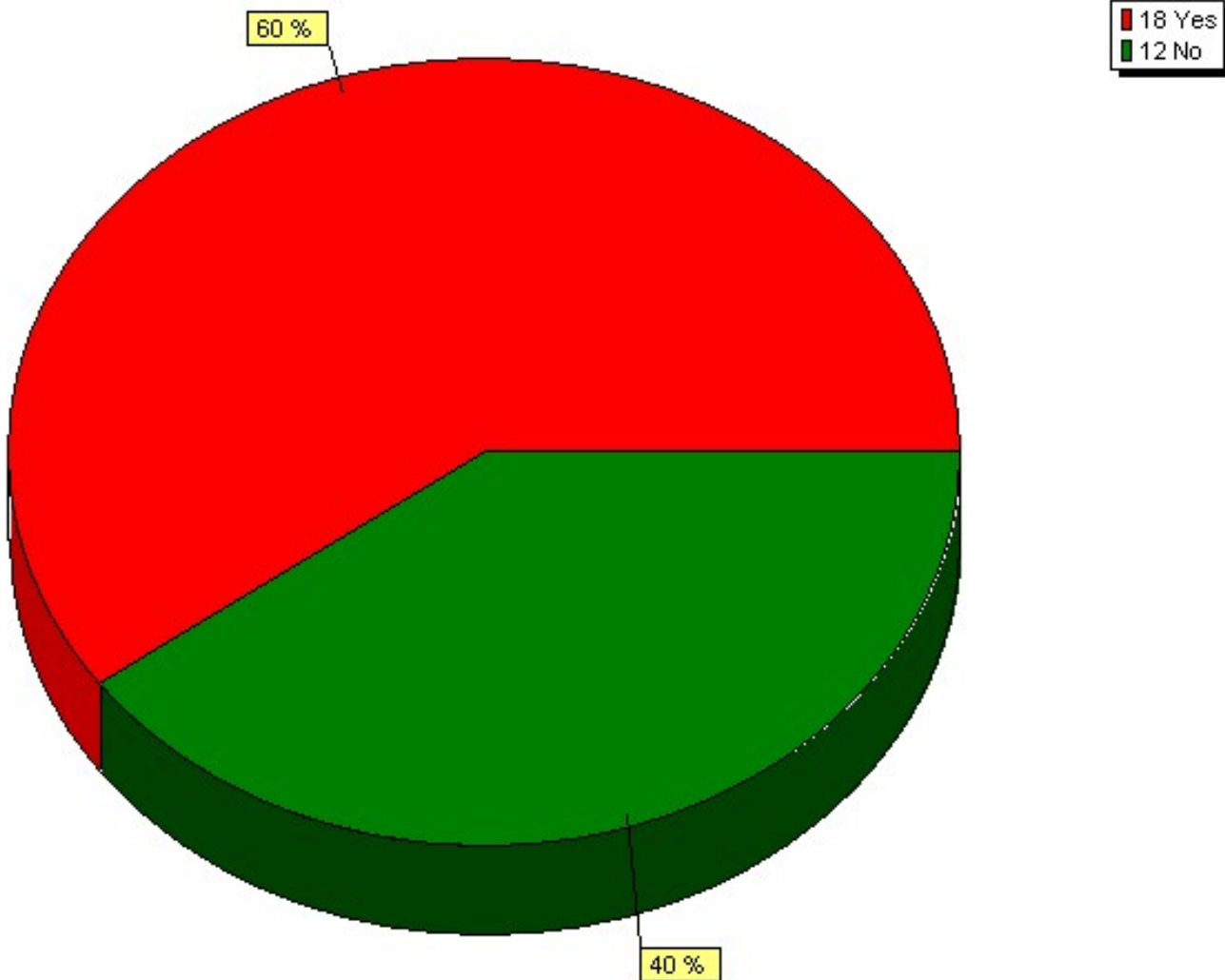
- **Highlights of User Group Survey**
– Ash Nallawalla
- **Trends in User Groups**
– Aaron Coldiron
- **Utilizing Online Communities**
– Chris Pirillo
- **Q&A**

APCUG Member Survey

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Do you think your group has a sound future? You can expand in the Comments field.

Type: Single Choice



APCUG Member Survey 2005

Summary of Responses

- Most (75%) over 15 years in existence
- Majority (55% to 90%) do not offer coverage of convergent technologies, e.g. PDA, digital photography, video, Media Center
- Mostly retirees as predominant age of members (nobody was < 50)
- Membership increasing slightly!
- Fewer than 20% collaborate with vendors at a group level

APCUG Member Survey

2005

Summary of Responses (cont.)

- Main problems faced:
 - Age
 - Declining membership
 - Little IT expertise
 - Lack of volunteers
 - Volunteers don't deliver their commitments
 - Lack of meeting space / storage
 - Members don't participate
 - Members don't write articles for the newsletter
 - No enthusiasm
 - Hard to fill board positions

RT: What Causes Decline?

- External environment
 - WWW provides all information
 - Fewer vendors
 - Young people don't join user groups(?)
 - Any more?
- Within User Groups
 - Make-up of members
 - Difficult volunteers in key positions
 - Failure to adapt
 - Any more?

History of User Groups

- **1970's** - User groups for the Apple and Heath computers started
- **1981**- Clubs began to grow after IBM introduced PC
- **1986** - First Annual User Group Summit meeting was held at the Fall Comdex trade show.
- **1987** - Representatives from 50 user groups approved the formation of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG).
- **1993** – Internet, Mosaic Web Browser
- APCUG today has 450 member groups in North America, Europe, and Australia

Trends in User Groups

- Groups seem to be segmenting
 - Technical groups
 - Larger groups
 - Senior groups
- Users are going online to find information
 - Search engines
 - Over 1.1M messages last month just on Windows (in English)
- Online Communities are born (1996 – 2000)
 - Forums
 - Blogs

Demo

Open Discussion and Q&A

