



# **General Assembly of THE WORLD WIDE WEB VIRTUAL LIBRARY, Geneva, October 13th 2005.**

## **1.1 Welcome, registration of those present**

### **1.1.1**

Mr Chapman opened the meeting by welcoming those present. As the President was in California it fell to him to initially chair the meeting.

### **1.1.2**

As the WWWVL was set up with the intention of being a 'virtual community' it was perhaps worth going over the reasons for the calling of this meeting and the authority for this meeting taking place.

As will be recounted in a report to be presented later, the WWWVL's central Catalog had fallen into some disrepair by mid-2004. Contact with many members had been lost. The initial euphoria of a virtual community had resulted in the WWWVL having physical contact details for very few of its members. The absence of any emailing to all the membership for many months combined with the massive increase in 'spam' that had occurred over the same period had resulted in a mailing list that was of little worth.

Contact had been re-established with the great majority of the membership. It was now, though, over five years since the establishment of the Association. During that period there has been no reports (save one officer's report, see below) to the members from officers or Council, there had been no General Assembly, there had been no election (except the initial one of late in the year 2000). Of the initial Council, almost half were no longer members of the Association.

In these circumstances there was not so much a 'power vacuum', but a 'legitimacy vacuum' for the revitalisation of the WWWVL.

Mr Chapman said in the circumstances he had proposed calling a formal physical General Assembly of the Association to install an administrative structure that could in turn call and supervise elections with a worldwide electorate.



Arguably, the calling of such a meeting was valid with him acting in the role of Acting Secretary.

He had though sought support from the membership at large, and was gratified that forty-eight members had taken the time to complete the physical paperwork and return it. Swiss law required a mandate of twenty percent of the membership to call a GA. The forty-eight responses amounted to forty-two percent of the members for whom contact details were available at that time<sup>1</sup>.

Further, the President had responded positively to the paper proposal for this meeting. Thus the meeting had been called and endorsed by the two remaining officers of the Association.

Mr Chapman apologised for the lengthy introduction. This meeting had, though, been called to put an end to uncertainty. He considered it worth the effort to clearly establish the legitimacy of the way forward.

The meeting had been announced by email to all members and by a notice placed on the [vlib.org](http://vlib.org) website main page for the last three weeks.

For the record, he should perhaps also note that reservations about this meeting had been received from only one member. He had telephoned that member and addressed those reservations.

### **1.1.3 Present**

The following members were present:

Michael Chapman  
Lisa Micah  
Raoul Sanchez  
Arthur Secret.

### **1.1.4 Apologies for absence**

The following members had stated they would be unable to attend: David Arnott, Paul Christ, Richard Dasher, Gabriel Fenteany, Marion Julia, Serge Noiret, Simone O'Byrne and Rüdiger Paschotta.

Many other members had also sent their encouragement and wishes for the success of the meeting.

### **1.1.5**

The Chairman after inviting discussion of the above asked the meeting if the above was accepted (ACCEPTED *nem con.*) and that all those present be registered as members attending this AG (ACCEPTED *nem con.*).

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<sup>1</sup>As of today the Catalog lists 226 member VL's, of which forty-seven are still 'out of contact'. The remaining 180-or-so are run by 135 individual members. So taking the most contrarian view possible of the actual membership the twenty percent threshold had been reached.

Additional responses were, also, received after the AG.



## **1.2 Receipt of Reports on the Association's activities from outgoing officers.**

### **Acceptance of reports.**

The following two reports were circulated. Those present having read them various points were highlighted.

#### **1.2.1 Treasurer**

#### **1.2.2 Maintainer of Catalog, Etc.**

Details of site traffic were presented visually to the meeting. These were details for both `vlib.org` and `vlsearch.org` (the latter having been registered specifically as a home for the VLSEARCH search engine).

Gene Thursby had registered the site `vlib.info` in connection with his own virtual libraries. The latter were now mostly hosted at `southasianist.info` and he had generously offered to transfer `vlib.info` to the Association. Steps to accomplish this were taking place. The meeting expressed their thanks to Mr Thursby.

Mr Chapman also reported that he had received a request for a dispute regarding a member be put to the meeting. To maintain confidentiality he considered it better if this were referred, along with other such outstanding matters, to the new administration. It was unfortunate if a 'caretaker' administration had to deal with such matters, but that could not be avoided.

#### **1.2.3 Former Council**

Of the original eleven man Council, five members were no longer maintaining VLs.

Special mention was made of Lynn Nelson, who if not the 'original member' of the WWWVL, certainly was there almost at the beginning. Ill health now prevented him from taking an active part in matters. His work was though being carried on by a team of others —not least those at the European University Institute at Florence. The meeting sent their best wishes to Lynn.

The untimely death of the Secretary and Vice President, Bertrand Ibrahim on July 3rd, 2001 was a tragic loss.

It would be normal to ask those present to stand for a minute both in respect and for private memories of those no longer with us. Those memories were though so tightly intertwined with the contribution made to the WWWVL, that the chairman instead suggested, that memories be based on that contribution: *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*.

The reports were then put to the meeting.

These were accepted and office holders relieved of their responsibilities (ACCEPTED *nem con.*).

## **1.3 Election of a Bureau**

Mr Secret proposed that those present be elected as the Association's Council *ad interim*.



The question of office holders was discussed. It was noted that the Constitution relied on Council electing from itself those to fill the necessary offices.

The proposal was though made and ACCEPTED (*nem con.*) at the AG that Mr Chapman continue as Secretary.

Mr Chapman proposed that Raoul Sanchez should be Association's President. This was ACCEPTED by acclaim. Mr Chapman expressed the Association's appreciation for his acceptance and noted how fitting it was that a former student of Bertrand Ibrahim should now be President of the Association that Bertrand was so fundamental in founding in 2000.

It was noted —and indeed hoped— that the Council might co-opt others, as necessary, to join in its work.

Mr Sanchez took the chair.

#### **1.4 The motion “This Meeting calls on the Bureau to organise elections as set out in Articles VI of the association’s Constitution within seven days of this meeting.”**

The motion was put to the meeting.

Discussion ensued on how ready the WWWVL was for an election. It was the general view that the procedure should be commenced as a matter of urgency. However as final steps had only been taken earlier that week to contact remaining out-of-touch members it was felt that a balance had to be struck with those attempts. It was normal to allow a period of one month after such an announcement for replies. It was though considered that this was too long and against the will of those calling the meeting.

Miss Micah proposed that the motion be amended by replacing ‘within seven days of this meeting’ by ‘before the end of this calendar month’. ACCEPTED (*nem con.*).

The amended motion was then put to the meeting. ACCEPTED (*nem con.*).

Mr Secret raised the question of the expenses occasioned by Mr Chapman relating to the organisation of this meeting and sought their reimbursement from Association funds. This was agreed.

#### **1.5 Close of meeting**

Mr Sanchez thanked those present, not least for taking the trouble to attend what was a very formal —if very necessary— meeting; and closed the meeting.



## Treasurer

A Report for the calendar years 2000 and 2001 had already been submitted to the membership.

Mr Chapman asked this meeting to formally accept that (and read its important explanatory notes) along with and as part of the present Report. ([http://vlib.org/members/VL\\_accounts01.pdf](http://vlib.org/members/VL_accounts01.pdf))

The period January 1st 2002 to December 31st 2004 had seen the following events:

*opening balance (carried forward from previous accounts):* 9,807 francs.

*Income:*

interest 2002 — 65

interest 2003 — 44

interest 2004 — 29

*Expenditure:*

taxes and charges 2002 — 28

taxes and charges 2003 — 31

taxes and charges 2004 — 26

Dec. 22nd 2004 — 1513

The above payment was for monies paid to pair.com by Gerard Manning (GBP 352) and Michael Chapman (USD 714) and included charges of 7 francs.

At the end of 2004 the Association had total liquid assets of 8,347 francs

As this date was now long in the past, it was also recorded that this calendar year there had been a donation of 5,000 francs in memory of Bertrand Ibrahim (see website for full details), and the Association had 13,347 francs to its credit on September 30th.

With a backlog of matters to attend to, the quiescent nature of the Association's accounting seemed likely to be at an end. The success of making paper contact with members would probably advocate the creation of more formal structures with ensuing expenses, as would a broadening range of administrative and management tasks. The past year had also seen a number of contacts made from other potential donors. These had been handled based on an interim policy of the then Management Committee. Though none had, thus far, shown fruit it seemed likely that this would change in the future.

*Michael Chapman*

*October 2005*

This document (one sheet) is [http://vlib.org/members/VL\\_accounts04.pdf](http://vlib.org/members/VL_accounts04.pdf)





## **Maintainer of Catalog, Etc.**

Due to increasing costs being incurred with our hosting company, not least due to spam mail building up in limited storage, vlib.org was moved to a new server in December 2004.

The move caused a number of relatively minor inconveniences and the opportunity was taken to build the central Catalog from a Topic Map database. Gabriel Fenteany made a great input into this work, not least in the æsthetics of the new site's design. The *de facto* nature of our maintaining the Catalog (and thus being acting Secretary of the Association) was recognised on formal appointment by the Chairman on February 13th 2005.

From the Spring until its dissolution (June 17th) I also served as chairman of the Management Committee. The committee coordinated much work on contacting 'lost' members and generally editing the Catalog. For a variety of reasons strategic issues were never fully explored and policy proposals not formulated.

I would like to thank the many members who helped during this restructuring phase.

Our work revealed several members had passed away in the course of the last five years. The difficulty in confirming all these reports, unfortunately, makes it inappropriate to record their names here.

The work of the first nine months of 2005 have revealed a variety of weaknesses in our 'virtual' community. It was perhaps too much 'here' and 'now' with too little thought for continuity (let alone the inevitability of mortality). The Virtual Library must, now, be based on a much firmer administrative footing.

Details of membership figures will be given orally to the meeting (and, obviously, any questions answered).

*Michael Chapman*

*October 2005*



This document (eight pages) is [http://vlib.org/members/VL\\_ag05.pdf](http://vlib.org/members/VL_ag05.pdf)