

Boost Governance

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A review of Boost's operational procedures was proposed by Dave Abrahams and subsequently approved and undertaken by the Boost moderators. This document describes the outcome of that study and reflects the consensus of the current moderators.

Annotations added to the original BoostCon slides have a blue background

The Problem

- Boost lacks an effective mechanism for making major decisions. Discussion on the list is no longer good enough to guide the moderators. The moderator's lives have evolved, so it isn't clear from whom to expect an answer when questions arise.
- There aren't enough moderators to represent as large and varied a group as Boost has become. Many decisions come down to one or two individuals who are willing to take the time to understand the situation and are motivated enough to do something about it.
- Good ideas are being dropped on the floor because no decision is made.

Several people at BoostCon gave examples of decision that have been delayed, not made, or soon need to be made.

An example of a decision that needs to be made soon is where to move the Boost server load, now that OSL is asking that we lighten the load on their server.

The Solution

- Separate list moderation and executive decision making functions
 - Moderators will perform list moderation.
 - A Steering Committee will handle executive decision making.
- When a single person is needed to represent Boost, the Steering Committee will appoint someone.

The Steering Committee's purview will include policy, procedural, and technical decisions. Day-to-day detailed decisions about particular libraries are left to the library developers, as always.

Steering Committee

- The name is “Steering Committee”
- Enough members to represent a range of views, but not enough to become unwieldy
- Chooses its own members and procedures
- Operates transparently, in the Boost tradition of openness

In initial private discussions, we tried to set some of the committee's policies and procedures, but then realized this was best left to the committee itself. The initial priorities (next slide) will make committee start-up decisions more open and transparent than trying to work out a lot of policies and procedures out beforehand.

Initial Priorities

- Define operating policies and procedures
- Set up communication channels with Boost membership such as a wiki and a mailing list

Policies need to ensure that the amount of process matches the gravity of the decision. So critical decisions should get wide review and discussion, while trivial decisions should have a more lightweight process.

Some decisions are best made by others, such as by individual library developers or by the release managers. If the steering committee is asked for such a decision, they will forward it to the appropriate place.

Initial Membership

- Three year terms:
 - Dave Abrahams, Marshall Clow, Beman Dawes, Hartmut Kaiser
- Two year terms:
 - Jeff Garland, Jon Kalb, Rob Stewart, Steven Watanabe

Splitting the initial steering committee membership into two and three year terms was done to ensure continuity as terms expire. The choice of who ended up with what term was a case of who volunteered first.

There hasn't been any discussion of possible term limits. The vision is something like "enough returning members for continuity, enough turnover for new viewpoints."