

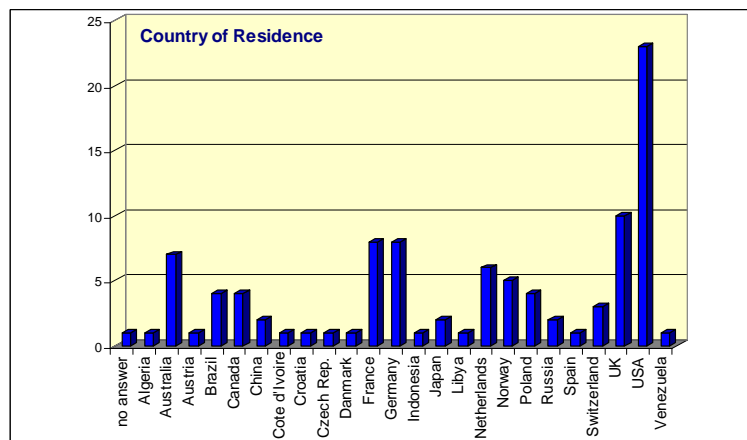
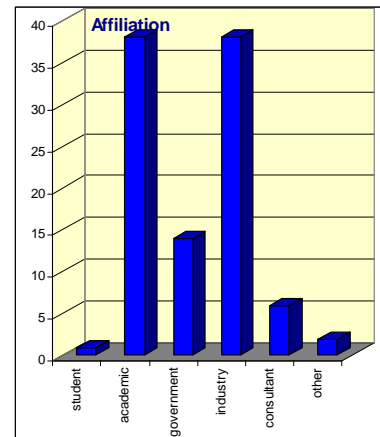
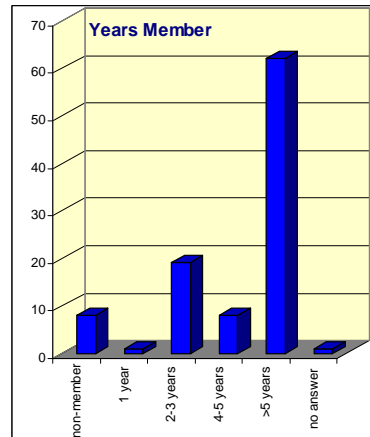
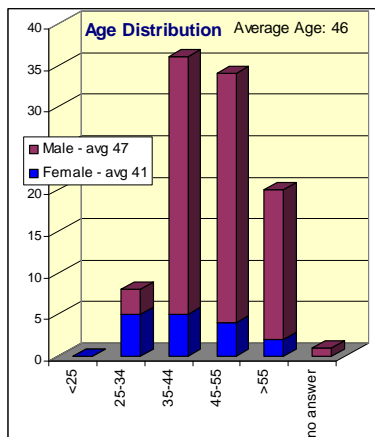
EAOG member survey summer 2009

In June of 2009 membership questionnaires were sent out to all members with registered e-mail addresses, including some 2008 members who had not renewed their membership. Out of a total of 430 valid addresses, 101 replies (23 %) were received, which we consider to be quite successful for a survey of this type. The survey was a follow-up of earlier membership polls 2005 with some of the questions being identical. Below is a summary of the main results. The full survey results can be viewed on our homepage (www.eaog.org).

Respondents' background

The first part of the survey referred to the background of the respondents. On the whole, they tend to be a fairly good representation of our membership, with the possible exception that the respondents include an above-average number of long-term members.

It may be somewhat disappointing - but not unexpected - to observe that the average age is approximately 46 years: male (84%) 47 years, female (16%) 41 years. As mentioned above, most of the respondents are long-term EAOG members (>5 years). There is a fair balance between academia (38 %) and industry (38 %), while also the country of residence shows the usual distribution for EAOG members.

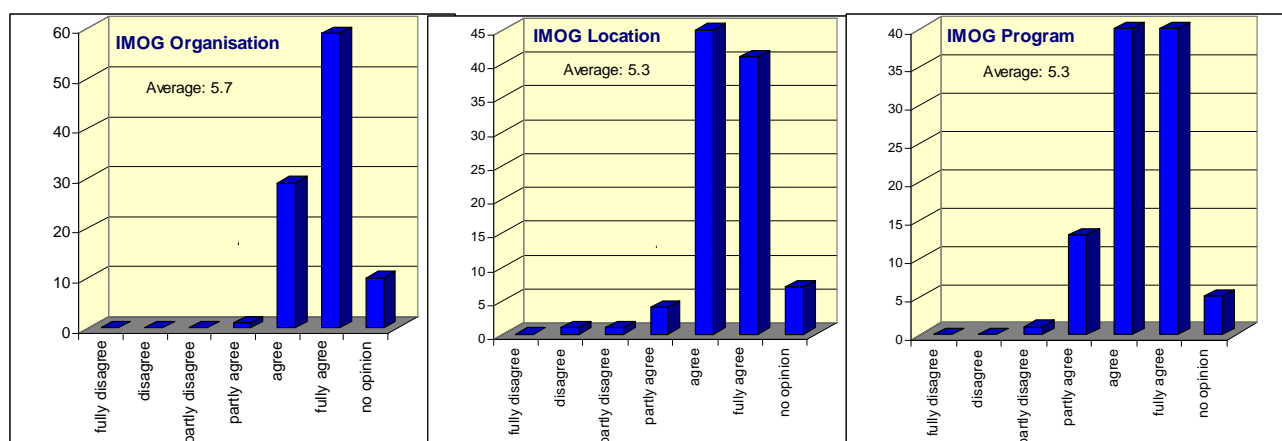


International Meeting on Organic Geochemistry (IMOG)

The second part of the survey was related to the recent (2003-2007) IMOG meetings. Respondents were asked to qualify statements on a scale of 1 to 6: fully disagree (1), disagree (2), partly disagree (3), partly agree (4), agree (5) and fully agree (6). The statements were:

- The organisation of recent (2003-2007) IMOGs has been good.
- The location of recent (2003-2007) IMOGs has been good.
- The scientific program of recent (2003-2007) IMOGs has been good.

The graphs below show the broad approval of the organisation, location and scientific program of the recent IMOGs. It is particularly gratifying to see that there are virtually no negative scores on these items.



Although it is nice to get positive scores on these (and other) issues, the most valuable feedback is usually found in the comments. Some of the more interesting comments are shown below (for the full list, see the survey results on our website).

“An excellent forum where organic geochemists can exchange information with researchers with more biochemical experience.”

“Perhaps the time as come to renew the discussion among the membership about holding an IMOG outside of Europe -- e.g., in Australia or the US.....?”

“Time between deadline for submission of abstracts and the meeting should be shorter”

The responses above confirm our impression that the recent IMOGs have been very successful and this gives us no immediate reason to make significant changes. However, all the comments that were made will be considered and may lead to smaller adjustments in the near future.

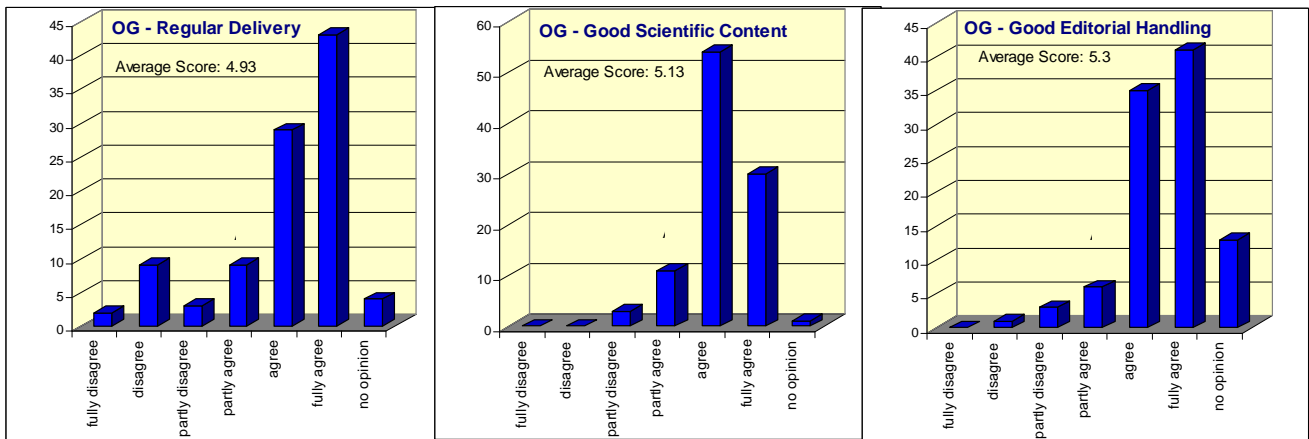
In the 2005 survey, the IMOG meetings were also rated very positively (average scores of 5.2, 5.2 and 4.7 on the questions above), while the replies are even more positive this time (5.7, 5.3 and 5.3).

Organic Geochemistry journal

The next part of the survey contained items regarding our “house” journal: Organic Geochemistry (OG). In the same was as described above, the respondents were asked to react to the following statements:

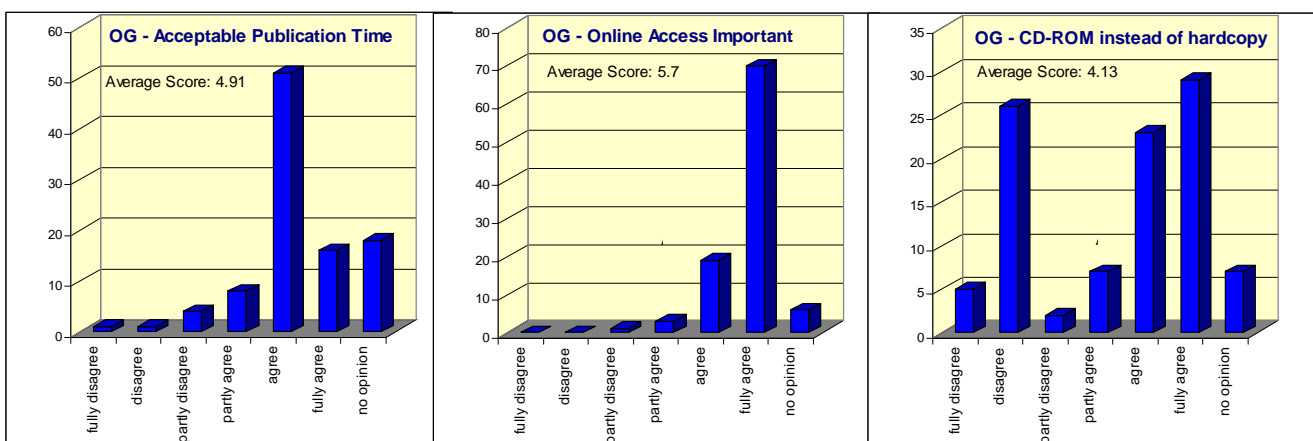
- The hardcopy of OG arrives regularly

- b) The scientific content of OG is good
- c) The editorial handling of manuscripts submitted to OG is good
- d) The time span between acceptance and publication date is acceptable
- e) Online access to OG (EAOG members currently back to 1995) is important
- f) I would be interested in a membership option with only electronic access to OG + a yearly CD-ROM



The statement on the regularity of the OG arrivals has a bimodal response distribution. While a majority is positive, there are a number of people that are dissatisfied. The response is much better than in the 2005 survey (average response then 3.9, now 4.9), which is good to see, as the board has had an intensive dialogue with Elsevier to improve this. The situation is much better now, but needs to be monitored continuously.

The appreciation for the scientific contents and the editorial process is high and in line with the 2005 results (average 5.1 and 5.3 now, against 4.9 and 4.9 in 2005).



The time between manuscript acceptance and publication is on average considered to be acceptable.

One of the most positive scores in the entire survey was received on the importance of online access to the journal (5.7, up from 5.3 in 2005). This is in line with efforts by the Board to negotiate online access for our members to the full OG archive (back to 1977, currently back to 1995).

The respondents are clearly divided with regard to the preference for only electronic access to the journal in combination with a yearly CD-ROM vs continued paper copies. This can be expected and a possible future option for a purely electronic subscription should not exclude the possibility for hardcopy journals.

Some selected comments on the Journal (full list can be found on our homepage):

“I am traditional & like a paper journal. My family would like me to use electronic access. Maybe I would too.”

“My comment is specially for f). I actually prefer the electronic access and a yearly CD like the AAPG Bulletin, because I experienced some problems with receiving hard copy publications sent by post. I missed some copies and could not obtain replacements.”

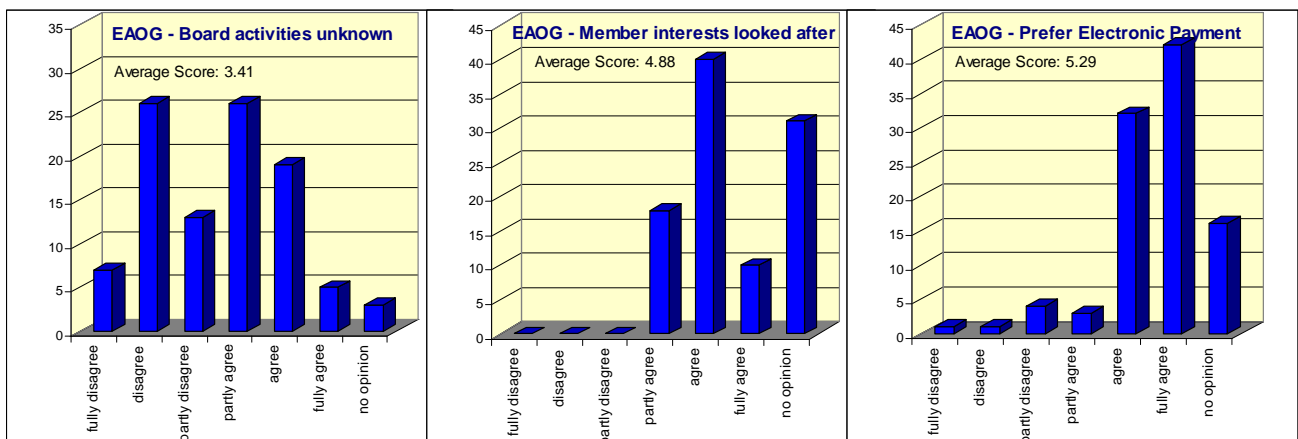
“The AAPG has gone to an electronic version of the Bulletin. Key to success with it is an email alert of the contents of each issue as it becomes available. This would be important if OG goes in that direction.”

“As historical issues of journals are increasingly digitised, it is incumbent on Elsevier to provide access to these back issues on their website either gratis or at a competitive rate.”

EAOG activities

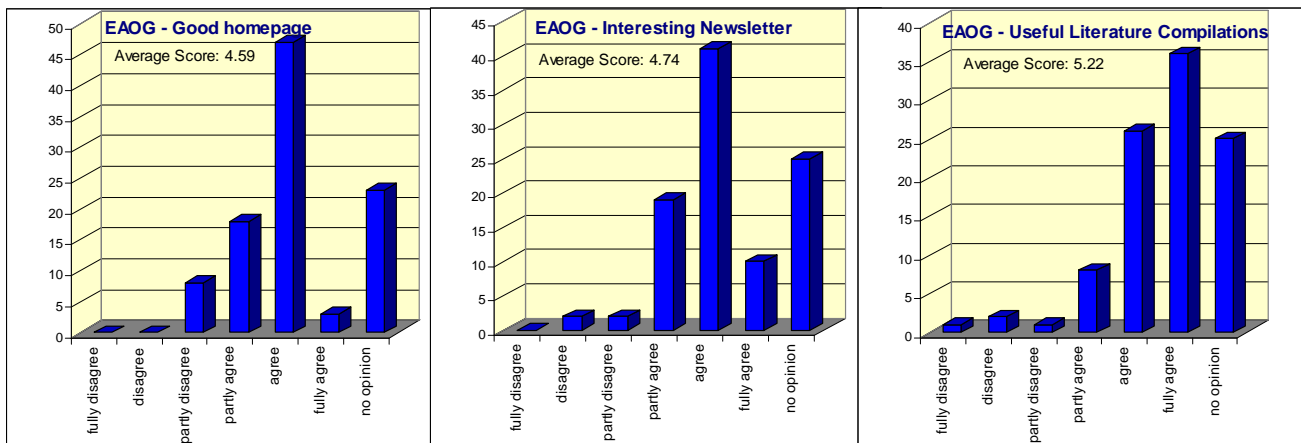
The last part of the survey addressed the EAOG activities. A response to the following statements was requested:

- I don't really know what the Board does (note the negative wording)
- The Board takes care of members' interests in a good way
- The content of the EAOG newsletter is interesting
- The content and layout of the EAOG homepage are good
- The monthly compilations of geochemical literature by Clifford Walters are very useful
- What is your opinion on the cost of EAOG membership/OG subscription?
(much too low, too low, somewhat low, somewhat high, too high, much to high)
- What is your opinion on the number of travel scholarships to students (typically 4 per annum, max 5000 euro)?
(as under f)
- Would you be willing to pay a higher membership fee to increase the activity level, particularly the travel scholarships?
(yes / no; if yes – how much)
- I would be interested in electronic handling of membership and payment.



I admit that including question a) was bound to give the result shown above: a majority of the respondents feels that they do not really know what the Board does. Fortunately, there is also a group of people who feels the opposite. Note that 7 people fully disagreed with the statement, which is remarkably good, since the Board only consist of 6 (+1 co-opted) members. We clearly need to do more self-advertising. However, it is comforting to see that – despite the alleged ignorance – most respondents feel that their interests are properly taken care of (avg. score 4.9 vs 4.6 in 2005).

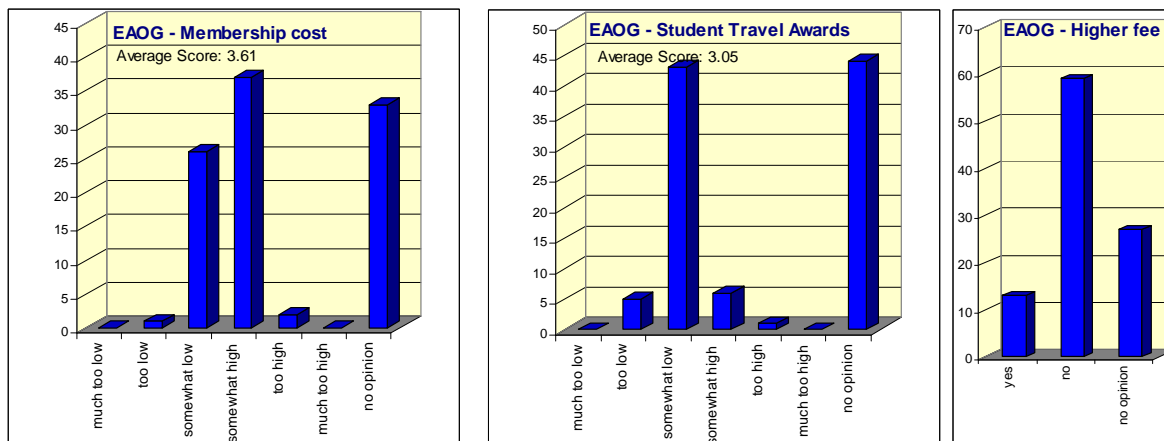
The interest in electronic handling of membership and payments is clear and this issue is part of our considerations on how our membership administration should be handled in the future.



The average responses on the quality and content of our home page and newsletter are quite positive (average 4.6 and 4.7 vs 4.3 and 4.5 in 2005). The best score in this block of questions (5.2) is seen for the literature compilations by Clifford Walters.

The last questions in the survey cover some financial issues. Here, I have made a beginner’s mistake by not including an “about right” alternative. Hence, the response on membership cost is fairly well distributed between “somewhat too low” and “somewhat too high”.

It is interesting to note that most respondents feel that the number of student travel scholarship is “somewhat to low”, while a large majority (60%; 82% not counting “no opinion”) is not prepared to contribute to these awards by paying a higher membership fee. However, a smaller group would be prepared for this, so maybe we should open up for voluntary contributions in the future.



I'll end this overview of the Membership Survey results with some more general comments that were made. Surprisingly (or not) they are on the whole pretty positive, which is nice to see and gives us some indication that we are more or less doing the right things.

“Increased awareness/connection/trans-society activity would be a good thing in my opinion (e.g. geochemical Society, AAPG, ACS OG, TSOP etc. With so many consultancies (including a rising number of academic-based ones) has the possibility of making the EAOG newsletter more commercial (advertising) been discussed?”

“In general, EAOG does a very good job from where I sit (somewhat on the sidelines). Would changing the name to 'International', 'Global' or 'World' help in promoting the Association to the widest possible audience? “

“I think that EAOG and IMOG are the crown jewels of organic geochemistry at the present time. Keep up the good work.”

I would like to thank all respondents for their contributions and hope that they feel that their feedback is used in a constructive manner

The full results from the survey (anonymously) will be published on the EAOG homepage (www.eaog.org).

Ger van Graas
December, 2009