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Position Statement

The pandemic has shifted COMMON more completely into the online instruction arena. It is an opportunity to strengthen our online offerings while at the same time identifying our distinctive offering of in-person education. There are two areas where COMMON should concentrate its efforts:

Revisit in-person regional seminars and conferences.

We will need to continue the hybrid model indefinitely while we rebuild spring and fall conference attendance but by carving out small seminars of 10-15 folks in areas where there are high numbers of IBM i users, we could pique interest in our larger conferences. Further, we need to use the free online offerings as an “on-ramp” to paid participation in in-person instruction.

Enhance member volunteer benefits to add value to purchasing a membership in COMMON.

I still think we have unique barter system and it is, in my opinion, a reason for the success of the conferences. People traded their expertise in one area for learning in another. The shared effort across all strata of expertise actually built up the community. Everyone had a stake. Everyone gained a benefit. I believe a proper balance can be achieved between budget realities and the member speaking benefits. I also believe that this concept can be extended into other volunteer areas in COMMON. For instance, documenting open source implementation on the i or contributing to a Common-sponsored open source solution should also be eligible for a discounted membership or conference event.