

Financial Transparency Report

NarraScope 2019

NarraScope 2019 took place at MIT, running from June 14th to 16th. It was, by every report, a rousing success. We received numerous comments praising the quality of the program, the level of organization, and the welcoming tone of the event.

NarraScope also defied the odds (for first-time conferences) by very nearly breaking even! Our total expenses were \$16298.09; our income was \$16082.09. We therefore fell short by just \$216.00, which is within 1.5% of our budget.

To be sure, this was more by luck than by planning. Our original estimate was that NarraScope would draw more attention than we could handle. We set a registration cap of 500 people. (This was determined by the size of MIT's largest lecture hall.) We expected to reach this limit, and we based the membership price on this estimate.

However, registration ran slower than we expected. We reached our registration deadline (May 17th) with 231 names on the list. Most of our costs were fairly elastic: food and supplies for each attendee. However, overhead costs and lost volume discounts threatened to put us a few thousand dollars behind income. Happily, sponsors and individual donations put the budget back in balance.

Attendance and Pricing

Total membership, including volunteers and late registrations, reached 254 by the day of the conference. Approximately 230 people arrived on site to pick up their badges.

Our flexible membership pricing model was fairly successful. Our original estimate was that we needed \$85 per attendee to break even. We decided to offer pay-what-you-can options of \$35 (for attendees with limited budget) and \$135 (for attendees who wanted to support them). Speakers, volunteers, and MIT students got in free.

Type	Cost	Count	Revenue
Standard	\$85.00	79	\$6715.00
Limited Budget	\$35.00	62	\$2170.00
Community Supporter	\$135.00	33	\$4455.00
Speaker	\$0.00	41	\$0.00
Volunteer	\$0.00	26	\$0.00
Student	\$0.00	13	\$0.00
Total		254	\$13340.00

(Revenue in this chart does not account for EventBrite fees.)

High-cost memberships lagged low-cost memberships. Therefore, the flexible pricing model lost about \$1450, as compared to a simple \$85 per head model. However, the value of an affordable and accessible convention is inestimable. We intend to continue the model in future years.

Revenue and Expenses

Memberships (minus fees)	\$12261.20
Sponsorships	\$2689.10
Individual donations	\$1131.79
Total revenue	\$16082.09
Travel expenses for keynote speaker	\$1258.83
MIT space and A/V support	\$2752.50
Web hosting (one year)	\$56.33
Event insurance	\$176.00
Breakfast (coffee and pastries)	\$2133.30
Lunch (Cornish Pasties)	\$5865.74
Drinks and snacks	\$209.60
Supplies and signage	\$228.03
Stickers and ribbons	\$557.20
Attendee badges and lanyards	\$664.31
Printed program books	\$341.11
Swag (bags, pins)	\$759.51
Afterparty (Za Pizza)	\$1295.63
Total expenses	\$16298.09
Deficit	\$216.00

(As of the time of this writing, MIT has not invoiced us, so this value is an estimate.)

Food and drink were the largest expense category, with the catered lunch being the largest single line item. The afterparty was a modest expense (a reserved restaurant and a spread of pizza; attendees paid for their own drinks), but a justified one. It turned out to be a natural extension of the weekend, with about 100 attendees socializing until late in the evening.

The venue was the second largest line item. The bulk of this was audiovisual support: microphone rental and the labor of a technician for the weekend. This only covered one of our three presentation rooms, and did not include any recording services. (Some attendees offered audio and video recording services on their own account.)

We retain a small surplus of supplies for next year's event. (Primarily paper bags. The minimum order of these was 500, so we only used half of them.) These could be accounted as inventory, but the value is not large enough to bother tracking.

The Future

We intend to run NarraScope 2020. The planning process has not yet begin. The conference committee will reconvene later this year with much the same membership, but likely with new members and with some changes in role for the existing members. Questions of location, date, venue, and price will be open for discussion by the new committee.

Future conferences will include many changes and additions, drawn both from our voluminous member feedback and from our own ambitions. Some of the improvements we hope for:

- A larger conference
- Registration available through the conference date and at the door
- More affordable accomodations, perhaps with a hotel room block
- Travel and accomodation grants for community members in need
- A public online chat forum for on-site announcements and member discussion
- More session formats (short talks, performances, live games)
- Signs for all rooms showing the daily schedule
- Microphones for all sessions
- Video recording of all sessions that wish recording
- Live closed captioning
- A dedicated quiet room
- Gender-neutral restroom facilities
- Fewer leftover bagels

Many of these options will require financial support. Therefore, please keep in mind that NarraScope is run by IFTF, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which is supported by your donations. Leave a note mentioning NarraScope with your contribution, and it will be accounted under "Individual donations" for next year's conference.

Thank you for supporting NarraScope and the community of narrative games!

<https://iftechfoundation.org/give/>