



## IS IT TIME FOR AN E-CLUB IN YOUR DISTRICT?

### WHAT IS AN E-CLUB?

E-clubs are much the same as other Rotary clubs: they meet weekly, carry out service projects, support The Rotary Foundation and have great fellowship and fun. So what's different about e-clubs? There are some great advantages. The most noteworthy is that you join your meeting online when it's convenient for you: day or night, any day of the week. Members of an e-club might live the same geographic area or they might live in cities across the world. That brings us to the most essential difference and also the benefit: e-clubs are Rotary clubs that meet electronically.

**Each Rotary district may have unlimited e-clubs. How many are in your district?**

E-clubs are highly flexible to meet the needs of members who travel frequently, whose schedules makes it difficult to attend in-person meetings regularly, who live in different places during the year, have limited mobility or are young members who prefer this type of a meeting format. It is an outstanding opportunity to involve more qualified members into Rotary, those who otherwise might not join a club that has a more traditional structure. E-clubs are especially ideal to engage younger members.

An e-club is also an outstanding venue for a Rotarian from another club to make up a missed meeting by participating in an e-club online meeting.

### WHO CAN JOIN AN E-CLUB?

Rotary e-clubs are considered to be worldwide. Each e-club is based in a specific district; however, its members can be from anywhere Rotary exists. Some e-clubs focus membership in a particular region or community, others do not. As with all clubs, membership is by invitation.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A ROTARY CLUB AND A ROTARY E-CLUB?

Rotary e-clubs are similar in many ways to other Rotary clubs and are guided by the same policies. As with all clubs, e-clubs meet weekly, perform service projects in local and international communities, support The Rotary Foundation and enjoy fellowship. The key difference is that an e-club conducts its weekly meeting via the club's website or another electronic platform. Rather than physically attending a meeting at an appointed day and time, members may attend meetings at any time and any day of the week online. Some e-clubs also have a weekly meeting for any members who wish to connect to a group at the same time via an electronic meeting service.

The key to effectiveness and vibrancy in an e-club is the same as other Rotary clubs: service-minded members and good projects, opportunities for fellowship and strong leaders.

### **HOW DO E-CLUBS WORK?**

E-club members use webinars, videoconferencing, message boards, instant messaging or tools such as Skype and Google Hangout to communicate and hold meetings. For example, a club member might post content online for that week's meeting, then other members join the discussion throughout the week. Some e-club members also meet in person for specific activities.

E-club meetings are hosted on a unique website. The official meeting time is considered to be when the webmaster or club secretary posts material for weekly discussion, but members may access the site based on their own schedules at any time during the week. E-club members discuss the item and any other club business through a chat room or other methods. To respect the privacy of e-club members, some meeting content or member data is protected from public view.

Although all Rotary e-clubs meet weekly and conduct business online, some e-clubs meet in person throughout the year at service projects, for social events, quarterly or semiannual dinners or the RI Convention. Some hold an in-person event monthly. Such meetings enhance fellowship and build club strength; however, they are not required

### **WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN AN E-CLUB?**

Business, professional and community members who cannot attend a weekly meeting in person, are seeking a more flexible format or prefer using this method of meeting and communication.

To be a member of an e-club, members should possess basic Internet use skills and knowledge of steps to protecting privacy online so that no member inadvertently compromises another's personal information.

It is very important that at least one of the founding members of the club be highly proficient in the design and maintenance of the club's website or in overseeing someone with that capability.

### **HOW CAN WE START AN E-CLUB?**

Developing a Rotary e-club and applying to RI for membership is essentially the same process as any other new Rotary club. As the first step, let your district governor know you are contemplating an e-club. He/She can help connect you with resources to help you get started, and will also initiate planning steps such as the new club survey and appointing a special representative to assist in development.

On a practical basis, e-clubs need:

- A website dedicated to the club with a unique URL
- A committed group of founding members who will manage the club's website
- An online meeting platform to host meetings (Example: Go to Meeting or similar)
- Secure sections of the website for members-only access to protect personal data
- An online financial transaction system that allow members to pay dues, make donations or process payments. This could be through the club website's functionality or PayPal for example.
- A method for visiting Rotarians to attend a meeting as a make up

As usual for club operational expenses, e-clubs are responsible for costs associated with purchasing a URL, to set up and maintain the site, and hosting the site on the Internet.

Keep in mind that a strong successful Rotary club, whether traditional format or an e-club, is not formed by any individual, but by a dedicated team consisting of the district governor, special representative, a sponsor club and charter members who share a common vision for Rotary in the community.

## **RESOURCES**

### **In Person**

- Your district governor
- Your district's extension chair
- Your RI Club & District Support (CDS) representative: Chris Brown Chris Brown  
[Chris.Brown@rotary.org](mailto:Chris.Brown@rotary.org), 847.866.3271
- Your Zone's Rotary Coordinator: Gayle Knepper, Zone 24W, [rotary5010@ak.net](mailto:rotary5010@ak.net) or 907.345.2044

### **Publications and Information**

- Organizing New Clubs: A Guide for District Governors and Special Representatives  
<https://www.rotary.org/en/document/585> (search for publication number 808)
- Rotary E-Club Resource Site (sponsored by the Rotary E-Club One in Colorado)
- <http://rotaryclubs.com/index.html>
- Search "Rotary E-Clubs" and find many sites of growing, thriving e-clubs for ideas and contacts

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