

2012-2013 Editorial Board

Co-Chairs

Cory Harms, M.S.
Iowa State University
charms@iastate.edu

Michael A. Chmielewski, C.P.M.
Law School Admission Council
mchmielewski@lsac.org

Associate Editor

Burr Millsap, CPA, M.B.A.
University of Oklahoma
bmillsap@ou.edu

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Colorado State University
farrah.bustamante@colostate.edu

Finesha Colton-Lee
Emory University
finesha.lee@emory.edu

Karin Coopersmith, C.P.M., LEED AP
Indiana University
kcoopers@indiana.edu

Kim Dulaney
Virginia Tech
kdulaney@exchange.vt.edu

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Santa Fe Community College
bob.mcwilliams@sfcsc.edu

Craig Passey, C.P.M.
Brigham Young University
craig_passey@byu.edu

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Grand Valley State University
rhodesv@gvsu.edu

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Arizona State University
john.riley@asu.edu

Shelby Slaughterhaupt
University of the Pacific
sslaughterhaupt@upac.edu

NAEP Board Liaisons

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HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College
tfogart@hacc.edu

Barry Swanson
University of Kansas
bswanson@ku.edu

E&I Liaison

Sabra Schell
E & I Cooperative Purchasing
sschell@eandl.org

NAEP Staff

Doreen Murner / Chief Executive Officer
dmurner@naepnet.org

Stanley Cowan / Manager of Finance & Administration
scowan@naepnet.org

Melanie Freeman / Manager, Education & Training
mfreeman@naepnet.org

Jacqueline Harget / Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator
jharget@naepnet.org

Annette Kirk / Journal Production Editor
journaleditor@naepnet.org

Neil D. Markee / Purchasing Link, Editor-in-Chief
ndm11777@aol.com

Mark Polakow / Senior Manager of Technology
mpolakow@naepnet.org

Shaunté Shelton-Slappy / Membership Administrator
sshelton@naepnet.org

Brian Yeoman / Director of Sustainable Leadership
byeoman@clintonfoundation.org



Doreen Murner
CEO, NAEP

Racing Toward Technology

Do you remember the tale of the tortoise and the hare? When it comes to technology, plenty of industries—healthcare, energy, and communications, for instance—run the race like hares, as fast as they possibly can. Others, like the tortoise, are slow. Sluggish, even.

Because of the recent economic downturn, budget constraints and a general lack of resources, our departments may look more like the tortoise.

It's ironic, because of all the places that technology sows its seeds, college campuses are among the most prolific. Consider data released last year by the Pew Internet Project, which confirms what everyone already knows: College students are more tech-savvy than the rest of us. According to Pew, undergraduates are more likely than the general adult population to use the Internet (98 percent versus 75 percent), have broadband access at home (93 percent versus 66 percent) and access the web via mobile devices (92 percent versus 57 percent). They're also more likely to use social networking sites (86 percent versus 60 percent) and to own a cellphone (96 percent versus 82 percent), laptop computer (88 percent versus 52 percent), and mp3 player (84 percent versus 45 percent).

Although students are technological sprinters, enabled by their experience of growing up with technology and universities making current technology readily available to them, we often might lag behind. Like the tortoise, however—who eventually won the race—there are signs that we are picking up the pace. Many NAEPers have implemented significant technological advances beginning with Pcard programs right up to sophisticated eprocurement systems and spend and contract management systems.

We are moving in the right direction, as evidenced in this technology-themed issue of the *Educational Procurement Journal*—which examines eprocurement (p. 10), universities' iPad policies (p. 13) and epayables (p. 9),

among other hot tech topics. New systems and software continually help procurement officers realize greater efficiencies, promote increased accountability, and save valuable time and money.

Because it's enhancing your profession, NAEP feels strongly that technology also should enhance your Association. This year, therefore, we have already made several technological investments on Members' behalf. At the Annual Meeting in April, for instance, we introduced QR codes and text messaging that delivered event information straight to your smartphone. In June, we launched a redesigned, redeployed, and reimagined website at NAEPnet.org.

Hosted on a completely new server infrastructure that promises improved stability and performance, the new website already is delivering an enriched Member experience through its Members-only portal, my.NAEPnet.org, which features an on-demand document library with downloadable RFPs, forms, manuals, and job descriptions; an on-demand library of webinars, research white papers, and benchmarks where junior and senior procurement professionals can access current metrics; and a board-specific forum, where the NAEP Board can collaborate virtually in service of NAEP Members.

The public-facing website has similarly been revamped with a new design and layout, a news section featuring Association and industry updates, and search engine optimization (SEO)—all of which will improve NAEP's visibility and branding, allowing us to attract new Members and, in turn, develop new products and services to help you do your job.

Now 91 years old, NAEP is proof: In the race for technology, it doesn't matter if you're the tortoise or the hare—as long as you cross the finish line. Run, jog or walk, therefore, it's time to start moving.