

# Financial Transparency Report

## NarraScope 2024

NarraScope 2024 ran June 21-23 at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, NY. Like last year, we operated as a hybrid event, with talks both presented on site and streamed live over Discord. Talks ran in three parallel tracks through the weekend.

Our workshop schedule was split into two days this year: an early session on June 8th and a pre-conference session on June 21st. All of this year's workshops were presented online.

To ameliorate last year's budget problems, we elected to charge a small fee for online registration this year. The talk streams were limited to registered attendees. As usual, all talks will be made available for free on our Youtube channel in the coming weeks.

We also raised prices (both in-person and online) after May 6th, retroactively making the original prices an early-bird special.

On the down side, the Strong was considerably more expensive than the universities which hosted our previous in-person events. Accelerating our fundraising efforts covered most of the gap, but honoraria were reduced from last year, and we were forced to drop the traditional Saturday/Sunday breakfast spread.

### Attendance

About 125 people registered to attend the event in person, including students and in-person speakers. We estimate that almost all of these showed up in Rochester. 150 more people registered as online-only, counting remote speakers.

The total of 275 attendees is lower than last year, but this can be entirely attributed to charging for online attendance. (Last year 300 people registered as online, but rather fewer watched talks on the Discord.) The in-person attendance was comfortably higher than last year. We do not have stats on online Discord participation, but our sense is that it was at least as strong as last year.

Our program listed 55 speakers including workshop presenters. As noted, all ten of the workshops were online this year. Of the 39 non-workshop talks, 12 were presented remotely.

Nearly all of our workshop sessions were registered to capacity (20-40 seats per session). Attendance in the sessions was about 50% of registrations.

## Financials

<i>Income</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Fees</i>	<i>Net After Fees</i>
53 Regular registrations	\$ 5945.00	\$ (476.31)	\$ 5468.69
25 Limited Budget registrations	\$ 875.00	\$ (102.75)	\$ 772.25
6 Community Support registrations	\$ 1020.00	\$ (78.06)	\$ 941.94
8 Community Extra Support registrations	\$ 1920.00	\$ (141.04)	\$ 1778.96
76 Online registrations	\$ 2290.00	\$ (287.68)	\$ 2002.32
48 Online Limited Budget registrations	\$ 240.00	\$ (102.24)	\$ 137.76
9 Online With Donation registrations	\$ 675.00	\$ (60.75)	\$ 614.25
52 complimentary* registrations	\$ 0.00		
<b>Total registrations</b>	<b>\$ 12965.00</b>	<b>\$ (1248.83)</b>	<b>\$ 11716.17</b>
Individual donations	\$ 9855.00	\$ (134.30)	\$ 9720.70
Institutional sponsorships	\$ 3000.00	\$ (63.14)	\$ 2936.86
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$ 25820.00</b>	<b>\$ (1446.27)</b>	<b>\$ 24373.73</b>

\* Includes speakers and students. Not all of our speakers requested a complimentary registration through EventBrite.

<i>Expense</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Fees</i>	<i>Total With Fees</i>
Keynote speaker travel	\$ 2642.71		\$ 2642.71
Web, Zoom, Discord hosting	\$ 403.78	\$ 4.37	\$ 408.15
Printed material and badges	\$ 512.07	\$ 14.21	\$ 526.28
Bags and other swag	\$ 215.56		\$ 215.56
KN95 masks	\$ 47.28		\$ 47.28
Catered lunch (two days)	\$ 6440.00	\$ 2045.34	\$ 8485.34
Event space	\$ 6300.00		\$ 6300.00
A/V support	\$ 5670.00		\$ 5670.00
Honoraria	\$ 1820.00	\$ 32.60	\$ 1852.60
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 24051.40</b>	<b>\$ 2096.52</b>	<b>\$ 26147.92</b>
<b>Net cost to IFTF</b>			<b>\$ 1774.19</b>

The in-person registration cost was \$95 (or \$135 after May 6th). As usual we offered a low-cost option of \$35 and two extra-donation options at \$170 and \$240. The new online registration cost was \$25 (\$40 after May 6th), with low-cost and extra-donation options set at \$5 and \$75 respectively.

Use of the low-cost options increased significantly this year. (27% of paid in-person registrations used the limited-budget option, as compared to 15% last year. Of online registrations, 36% used the limited-budget option.) This may indicate that \$135 is close to the elastic limit for NarraScope pricing, or just that our audience is feeling more financially straitened this year. It is also likely that some people feel that online conferences should be free, and therefore gravitated to the lowest-cost option.

However, use of the extra-donation in-person options also increased. Overall, our registration revenue averaged \$95 per paid in-person member, only slightly lower than last year's take of \$105 per paid member.

We paid our keynote speaker \$500 this year. Of our other speakers, 33 accepted a \$40 honorarium.

We started fundraising earlier and in less of a panic this year. (Which is not to say we didn't have a few panicked moments.) As we hoped, setting high fundraiser goals (\$10000 from individuals, \$10000 from institutions) helped to activate our donor base. We fell short of the institutional goal, but total donations were much higher than last year.

The numbers shown above are, in one sense, arbitrary. In late April, IFTF received an anonymous donation of \$10000. This was the middle of the NarraScope fundraiser, but the donation was not specifically earmarked for NarraScope or any other program. (It was transferred through another nonprofit, giving us no way to reach out to the donor.)

We were therefore left with the question of how much of that sum to apply to NarraScope, and how much to put towards other IFTF programs (such as the Grants Committee). We decided to apply \$3600 to the conference (included in "Individual donations" above), thus reducing the overall conference deficit. We did *not* allow the other \$6400 to tempt us into increasing conference expenditures. (Alas for the coffee and doughnuts.)

To be clear, we could have chosen the value \$5400 instead of \$3600, thus declaring this NarraScope as break-even. But this would merely be an accounting choice; it would not affect IFTF's real-world financial position.

## **Hybrid Operation**

To support our second hybrid event, we contacted HamiltonQAV, a local Rochester A/V services company. Hamilton handled the recording and livestreaming for the entire conference at a generous discount on their regular rates. Streams were broadcast via

Discord. We also used Discord for all of the conference's online discussion and social chatter.

Hamilton provided more personnel and a better equipment setup than we had last year. Presenter slides were fed directly into the livestream output, rather than being recorded with a camera pointing at the projector screen. Remote talks were handled either via prerecorded video (played on site by a conference volunteer), or by inviting the speaker to a private Zoom call (again hosted by a volunteer). Hamilton arrived on Friday afternoon to set up and were able to resolve most technical issues before the conference began on Saturday. The remaining issues mostly had to do with volunteer hardware (the laptops we brought for Zoom calls). These hitches were resolved through the usual combination of improvisation and video adapters, and all the talks were streamed as planned.

The stream audio quality was good in the Theater space, which had a podium mic. However, the other two talk rooms had audio problems, due to the back-of-room camera mics and an inadequately soundproof room partition. For future hybrid events, we will try to secure podium or body mics for all presenters.

As of this writing, we have not received the raw video recordings from Hamilton. Once we do, we will begin editing them for our Youtube channel.

We maintained our strong masking policy this year, to the general approval of the attending members. The rule was relaxed for our lunch service; most attendees ate unmasked in the Strong's (not very large) private function lunchroom. We were also unavoidably exposed to the public. The Strong was open to regular visitors through most of the conference, and our presentation rooms were on opposite sides of the museum. Attendees generally wore masks when navigating the museum, but we did not try to enforce this.

On the other hand, many attendees took advantage of the summer weather to eat dinner outdoors. (The patio of the nearby Nerdvana bar was popular all three days.) In any case, no attendees have reported COVID symptoms or test results in the two weeks since the event.

## **The Future**

Last year's report said "we should be able to return NarraScope to financial self-sufficiency [in 2024]." We failed at this. Both revenue and costs approximately doubled over last year's event. While April's large anonymous donation kept everything roughly in balance, we cannot sustainably rely on a single large donor. We plan to accelerate fundraising efforts for all of IFTF in the coming year, starting with an advisory summit scheduled for early July.

The plans for next year's NarraScope remain hazy, as the most recent NarraScope chairs (Andrew and Justin) have both stepped back from that role. Any discussion of location and format must wait until we have a new chair for 2025. Several volunteers

have expressed an interest in helping next year; we are currently engaged in discussion about who might want to run the show. However, NarraScope's momentum and energy are undeniable. In some form, NarraScope will continue.

As always, 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!