



What You Need to Know about Rotary E-Clubs

Rotary e-clubs are Rotary clubs that meet electronically. A 2010 Council on Legislation enactment recognized Rotary e-clubs as part of Rotary International, following a six-year pilot project. As of 1 July 2010, RI has 14 e-clubs, all of them chartered during the pilot.

What is the difference between Rotary clubs and Rotary e-clubs?

Rotary e-clubs follow the same policies as all Rotary clubs. The key difference is that an e-club conducts its weekly meeting on the club's website. Rather than being physically present at an appointed day and time, members may attend meetings at any time and any day of the week.

As all Rotary clubs do, Rotary e-clubs meet weekly, perform service projects in local and international communities, support The Rotary Foundation, and enjoy fellowship among members. And the keys to their effectiveness are also the same: service-minded members, opportunities for fellowship, and strong leadership.

During the 2004-10 pilot, e-clubs performed 355 community service projects, 106 international service projects, 55 vocational service projects, and 70 youth service projects. E-clubs gave more than US\$150,000 to The Rotary Foundation, including more than \$21,500 to Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge.

How do e-clubs work?

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 at their convenience at any point during the week. E-club members discuss the item and any other club business through a chatroom feature or other means. 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 do meet in person at various times throughout the year at service projects, quarterly or semiannual dinners, or the RI Convention. Such meetings can enhance fellowship among e-club members; however, they're strictly optional.

Who participates in e-clubs?

For business, professional, and community leaders who are unable to attend a weekly meeting in person (due to physical disabilities, location constraints, or busy schedules), the e-club option offers the opportunity to meet, conduct service projects, and participate in Rotary fellowship. From time to time, Rotarians who miss their regular Rotary club meeting may make up a meeting by attending an e-club meeting online, a valuable service for all members. As of August 2010, 360 Rotarians located in 30 countries are e-club members. Of these, 146 had previously been members of Rotary clubs, including four past district governors.

Membership in an e-club requires a basic Internet skills set, including the ability to navigate websites with ease. Members should also have a working knowledge of the principles of protecting privacy online, so that no club member compromises another's sensitive personal information.

In addition, it is critical that at least one of the founding members of the club be highly proficient in the design and maintenance of the club's website. The member should be experienced in building a website that meets all of the technological requirements listed below.

What are the policies for e-clubs?

The RI Bylaws allow for two e-clubs per district. For this reason, it's important to check with your district governor early on if you're interested in starting an e-club. Rotary e-clubs are considered by the RI Board to be worldwide. While each e-club is assigned to a district, members can come from any country or geographical area where Rotary maintains a presence.

For more on policies regarding e-clubs, refer to the Rotary Code of Policies and the Report of Action of the 2010 Council on Legislation.

What are the technical requirements?

Because the meeting venue is on a website, e-clubs must have:

- A dedicated website
- Online meeting software to host a meeting (see information on software available through Rotary's partnership with Citrix Online)
- Private sections of the website that protect members' online personal data and only members can access
- Online financial transaction systems for dues payments from members, contributions, and remittances

E-clubs are responsible for all costs associated with maintaining a URL and hosting their website on the Internet.

How do I join an existing e-club?

As with all Rotary clubs, membership is by invitation.

How do we charter an e-club?

Applying for membership in RI as a Rotary e-club is essentially the same process as applying as a Rotary club. Contact your district governor first. The governor is responsible for organizing and establishing new clubs and will work with the district extension committee to that end. The governor will also need to initiate a New Club Survey and appoint a special representative and sponsor club to assist in planning, as outlined in the RI publication *Organizing New Clubs: A Guide for District Governors and Special Representatives*.

Remember that a successful Rotary club is not formed by any individual but rather by a dedicated team consisting of the district governor, special representative, sponsor club, and charter members who share a common vision for Rotary in their community.

Resources

Your RI Club and District Support (CDS) representative

Organizing New Clubs: A Guide for District Governors and Special Representatives (808)

List of current Rotary e-clubs