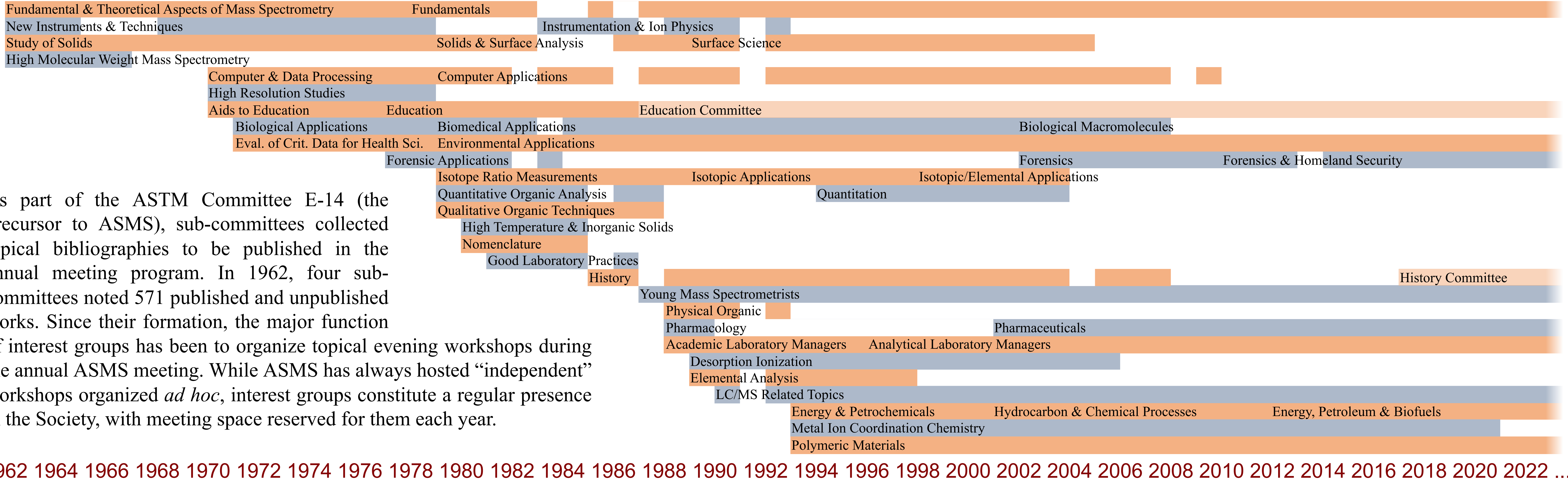




60 Years of Interest Groups at Mass Spectrometry Meetings



As part of the ASTM Committee E-14 (the precursor to ASMS), sub-committees collected topical bibliographies to be published in the annual meeting program. In 1962, four sub-committees noted 571 published and unpublished works. Since their formation, the major function of interest groups has been to organize topical evening workshops during the annual ASMS meeting. While ASMS has always hosted “independent” workshops organized *ad hoc*, interest groups constitute a regular presence in the Society, with meeting space reserved for them each year.

ASTM Sub-committees organized into “ASMS Committees”

most ASMS Committees re-named “Interest Groups”

The formation of a new interest group is something of a lagging indicator of a developing field. Novel techniques and applications need to build an audience at the annual ASMS meeting and in the literature before they can draw a room full of workshop attendees at the end of an already-full day of scientific program. Often a workshop is organized for several meetings before it is recognized as an interest group.

The appearance and disappearance of interest groups shows how attendance at ASMS has changed over time. Many group names have also changed to reflect updated focus. Some groups have merged to stay relevant (“Isotopic Applications” + “Elemental Analysis”) or split into multiple topics (“Education” → the ASMS Education Committee, “Young Mass Spectrometrists”). Some areas of interest become so ubiquitous, e.g. “Computer Applications”, that they cease to make sense as stand-alone topics.

Two interest groups have been converted back into ASMS committees that meet throughout the year: “Education” in 1987 and “History” in 2017. Some regular interest groups have begun to organize activities outside ASMS meetings through social networks.

Sometimes active groups miss a year, or even many years. Groups can also dissolve and later convene around the same topic; the “Forensics” group re-formed after an 18-year gap. Every group active in 2022 returned in 2023, joined by a new group “Mass Spectral Libraries” and the return from hiatus of “Oligonucleotides & Nucleic Acids”.