

CELEBRATE! 27th Annual
Visitor Studies Association
Conference

July 15-19, 2014
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Building Capacity

for Evaluation:

Individuals, Institutions,
the Field



VSA

Visitor Studies Association

**In Memory of
Alan J. Friedman, President, Visitor Studies Association, 2005- 2007**



Photos: courtesy of the New York Hall of Science

Those who knew Alan are left wondering, who will be our wise man? Who will be our champion? Who will say what needs to be said with charm and eloquence? Who will fight the fight that needs fighting? Who will smile the way Alan smiled? Who will exude the cheery disposition we all need from time to time? And who will kiss the ladies on both cheeks?

We are left with an eerie silence, an enormous hole in our informal science world. Alan had so many really good ideas that grew into really great projects that generated fabulous results. He was creative, smart, humble, and oh so generous with his time—to everyone who approached him; he was a truly nice guy—a real, honest-to-goodness mensch. We will miss him.

Beverly Serrell; Elsa Bailey; Sue Allen; Randi Korn; Kirsten Ellenbogen; Kirsten Buchner – Insight Evaluation Services; University of Queensland Visitor Research Team; Ellen Giusti; Josh Gutwill – Exploratorium; Chris Catanese; Lynn Courtney; Jessica Sickler; Matt Sikora; J2R2 Leadership & Change Associates, LLC; Kathleen McLean; People, Places & Design Research

To honor Alan's gentlemanly ways, we will host a kissing booth. For those who wish to be kissed on both cheeks, and for those who wish to be the kissers—please stop by and pay your respects.

Conference Schedule at a Glance

Monday, July 14

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Registration Open

Tuesday, July 15

8:00 – 11:00 a.m. Registration Open

4:30 – 7:30 p.m. Registration Open

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Pre-Conference Workshops**
Hotel Conference Rooms, Explora Science Center and Children's Museum

Wednesday, July 16

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration Open

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. **VSA Board of Directors Meeting**
Fireplace Room

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Pre-Conference Workshops**
Hotel Conference Rooms

5:00 – 6:30 p.m. **April Award Celebration**
(ticket required)
Seasons Rotisserie & Grill, Balthazar Room

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. **Opening Reception at Explora**
(ticket required)
Explora Science Center and Children's Museum

Thursday, July 17

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Registration Open

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Coffee Break
North Atrium

9:15 – 9:45 a.m. **Welcome from VSA and President's Address**
Alvarado D

9:45 – 10:45 a.m. **Opening Keynote**
Alvarado D

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – One**
Alvarado A, B, C, D, F

12:15 – 2:15 p.m. Lunch on Your Own

12:15 – 2:15 p.m. **Committee Meetings**
Alvarado A, B, C

2:15 – 3:30 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Two**
Alvarado A, B, C, F

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Coffee Break
North Atrium

4:00 – 5:15 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Three**
Alvarado A, B, C, D

6:30 – 9:00 p.m. **An Evening at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History**
(ticket required)
Buses leave hotel promptly at 6:00 p.m. from main hotel entrance

Friday, July 18

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Registration Open

7:45 – 8:00 a.m. Coffee Break
North Atrium

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **VSA Business Meeting**
Alvarado D

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Moderated Panel Discussion**
Alvarado D

10:30 – 11:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Four**
Alvarado A, B, C, D, F

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. **Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting**
Alvarado G

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. Lunch on Your Own

12:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Committee Meetings**
Alvarado A, B, C

1:45 – 3:00 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Five**
Alvarado A, B, C, F

3:15 – 4:15 p.m. Coffee Break
North Atrium

3:15 – 4:15 p.m. **VSA Poster Session**
North Atrium

5:00 – 6:30 p.m. **Get to Know VSA Happy Hour**
(ticket required)
QBar Lounge, Hotel Albuquerque

Saturday, July 19

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Coffee Break
North Atrium

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Six**
Alvarado A, B, C, E

10:30 – 11:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Seven**
Alvarado A, B, C, E

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. **Closing Luncheon & Plenary**
(ticket required)
Alvarado D

2:00 – 5:00 p.m. **Post-Conference Workshop**
Alvarado A

RK&A

Our passion for learning endures.



twenty-fifth anniversary

We are celebrating our anniversary. Please join our celebration by asking others how museums have enriched their lives. Write 25@randikorn.com and tell us what you learn so we can share it with our followers.

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WELCOME

Dear Visitor Studies Conference Attendees:

Welcome to Albuquerque for the 27th Annual Conference of the Visitor Studies Association! With the increasing interest and attention to evaluation across the informal learning and cultural field, we felt it timely to direct this year's conference to the exploration of capacity building for evaluation. This year's sessions, speakers, and events offer a chance for you to explore new findings and methods, but we hope you will also think creatively about how your work fits into the broader field and how you can help shape the future of evaluation within your institution and beyond.

Building Capacity for Evaluation: Individuals, Institutions, the Field

The 2014 VSA Conference offers attendees the opportunity to address the increasing interest in evaluation and think strategically about how to continually build capacity for evaluation. Capacity-building can happen at many levels, from the development of individual skills, to fostering culture and stakeholder knowledge at the institutional or geographic level, to increasing consistency within the field.

Together we will examine new methods of data collection and new methods of understanding visitors that could increase our individual capacities as researchers. We will consider ways to build systems that support the process of conducting evaluation. We will identify successful strategies for infusing evaluative thinking into the culture of an organization. We will debate the merits of ideas for standardizing our work to increase stakeholder understanding and use of findings. We invite attendees to explore capacity-building on all levels, including those that suggest next steps for our field to support evaluation efforts across the informal learning field in its entirety.

Our Albuquerque Hosts

This year we are excited to enjoy Southwestern hospitality in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In addition to taking in the beauty of the Sandia Mountains, you have the opportunity to learn about and enjoy the food, festivals, and history of this Route 66 city that is home to the Shins, the largest hot air balloon festival in the world, and Breaking Bad. Our Albuquerque hosts have graciously planned two evening events at local institutions including the Opening Reception at Explora and An Evening at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History. Many thanks also go to the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science as a big partner in the conference planning and support. We hope you enjoy exploring these local institutions. Please thank our hosts when you see them!

In addition to the events planned by our hosts, there will be the 18th Annual April Award celebrated during a cocktail hour prior to the Opening Reception, the popular Get to Know VSA Happy Hour, as well as the Closing Luncheon. Consult this program for times and locations of these events.

We hope you enjoy this conference, interact with others, and leave inspired. Do feel free to share your suggestions and thoughts with VSA about the 2015 conference that will be in Indianapolis, Indiana! We hope to see you there!

With warmest regards,

Your 2014 Program Co-Chairs
Claire Thoma and Linda Wilson

What you need to know ...

Registration and Information Desk

Check in at the registration desk, located in the North Atrium of the Hotel Albuquerque for conference materials, badges, tickets, and information. You will also find information about the local sites and events from the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau information that will be provided!

Registration Desk Hours:

Monday, July 14

4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 15

8:00 – 11:00 a.m.; 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 16

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 17,

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Friday, July 18,

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Conference Abstracts

The 2014 VSA Conference Abstracts introduce the presentations, panels, and posters at this year's conference. Beyond that, they act as a lasting record of the topics discussed here in Albuquerque as we build capacity for visitor studies. In keeping with our commitment to environmental stewardship, VSA now publishes the abstracts exclusively in electronic format. To download the full PDF, go to: <http://visitorstudies.org/conference-overview/past-conferences>

Conference Tweeting

Use #vsa14 for all your conference tweets!

CONFERENCE EVENTS

(Pre-registration is REQUIRED for ALL events. Some tickets may still be available at the information desk during registration)

Conference Events

April Award Celebration at Seasons Rotisserie & Grill

2031 Mountain Road Northwest

Wednesday, July 16 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

\$20 - \$40

You don't want to miss this event! Kick off the 2014 VSA conference in Albuquerque with an award celebration to remember. Each year, the April Award honors one outstanding new professional and welcomes them to the visitor studies field. Come toast this year's award recipient, meet up with friends and colleagues old and new, and support a longstanding VSA tradition. Additional donations get you extra drink tickets. This is a fundraiser to keep the April Award fund alive, so please give generously if you can!

Sponsored by the Albuquerque Museums



Opening Reception at Explora Science Center and Children's Museum

Wednesday, July 16 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

\$45

Join VSA at Explora for a festive conference kick-off event. Explora is a new kind of learning place, providing real experiences with real things that put people's learning in their own hands. Explora's mission is to create opportunities for inspirational discovery and the joy of lifelong learning through interactive experiences in science, technology and art. Explora's exhibits, designed to engage visitors of all ages, are scaled small – most fit on tabletops.

The parts are hand-sized and made for handling, with the intention that both the exhibit and the user are changed by the encounter.

Pre-registration is required. Event includes heavy appetizers and refreshments. Due to New Mexico regulations, alcohol will not be served at the museum. More information will be provided regarding drink tickets at Registration Desk. The museum and exhibits will be open for attendees.



explora!

Ideas You Can Touch
Ideas que puedes tocar

Event hosted by Explora Science Center and Children's Museum.

An Evening at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History - Reactions Welcome

Thursday, July 17 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

\$45

Join VSA at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History. The Nuclear Museum is the nation's only congressionally chartered museum in its field and an intriguing place to learn the story of the Atomic Age, from early research of nuclear development through today's peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

Evening includes heavy appetizers and refreshments. Due to New Mexico regulations, alcohol will not be served at the museum. More information will be provided regarding drink tickets at Registration Desk. The museum and exhibits will be open for attendees. Transportation to and from the Museum will be provided, buses leave from the Hotel entrance at 6:00 p.m.



Event hosted by the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History.



Get to Know VSA Happy Hour
Friday, July 18 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Free
VSA's Membership Committee invites new attendees and all members for a happy hour at the Hotel Albuquerque. This is an informal way to meet and chat with other members and VSA leaders to learn about VSA committees.

Pre-registration is required for this event. Hors d'oeuvres provided, cash bar available.

Event to be held at QBar, Hotel Albuquerque.

Closing Luncheon
Saturday, July 19 12:00 – 1:30 pm

Free
Join colleagues for a last hurrah and an opportunity to gather your thoughts after several scintillating days of presentations. Speak with colleagues about your own reflections on ideas related to building capacity for evaluation and hear about potential next steps that conference conversations have sparked for a few of VSA's leaders.

Pre-registration is required for this event. Event includes food and refreshments, and will take place in room Alvarado D at Hotel Albuquerque.

Sponsored by New Knowledge

new
knowledge.org

Congratulations to the Recipients of the April Award and Student Scholarships

The April Award and Student Scholarship programs help bring new talent to the field of visitor studies and the Visitor Studies Association.

VSA is pleased to welcome the following recipients to their first Visitor Studies Conference:

18th Annual April Award:

Ivel Gontan Jr, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry

Meet Ivel at the April Award Celebration on Wednesday, July 16. The April Award commends an outstanding emerging professional in the field. The award was established by Dr. Marilyn (Molly) Hood to honor the memory of her longtime research assistant April Lahm.

2014 Student Scholarships:

Stacy Niemiec, Erikson Institute

Lauren Wilson, University of Texas

Taline Kuyumjian, University of Washington

The Student Scholarship program supports conference attendance for active students interested in the field of visitor studies.

**Leadership in VSA.
Past. Present. Future.**

Time for YOU to get involved!!

YOUR NAME HERE...

Joe Heimlich, Dale McCreedy, Kirsten Ellenbogen, Kathy McLean, Alan Friedman, Mary Ellen Munley, Deborah Perry, Ross Loomis, Ridgeley Williams, Harris Shettel

Conference Workshops

Tuesday, July 15, Wednesday, July 16, and Saturday, July 19

Registration is required. (Fee: Full Day Workshops - \$150 VSA Members, \$180 Non-Members, \$125 Student Members Half Day Workshops - \$75 VSA Members, \$90 Non-Members, \$65 Student Members) Registration may be available onsite pending space availability. Please check at the Registration Desk for more information.

Almost all workshops are at the Hotel Albuquerque. Attendees are responsible for transportation to and from the workshop locations. Please check the Registration Desk for transportation information if needed.

VSA presents two days of professional development workshops in conjunction with the conference. Pre-conference workshops provide an important opportunity for professional development and are attended by students, evaluators, exhibit and program designers, and museum directors alike. Leaders of these lively half and full day workshops come from a broad range of fields and professions.

LEVEL 101 We are offering a special slate of workshops for those who may be new to visitor studies, but want to add evaluation to their skill set. These “get started fast” workshops are labeled “Level 101.”

LEVEL 301 For experienced evaluators, we also have a robust slate of “Level 301” advanced workshops.

FULL DAY Full Day Workshops -
\$150 VSA Members
\$180 non-Members

HALF DAY Half Day Workshops -
\$75 VSA Members
\$90 non-Members

VSA supports the ongoing professional development of all evaluators across the informal learning field. With the support of a planning grant from the Informal Science Education Program of the National Science Foundation, VSA developed the Evaluator Competencies for Professional Development Assessment (visitorstudies.org/professional-development). Since individuals are attracted to the field of visitor studies from a variety of backgrounds, these guidelines are to aid in the identification of transferable skills and knowledge from previous experiences as well as areas that are considered specific to the field of visitor studies. VSA has identified the competencies most relevant for each conference workshop. Below is a description of each of the major competencies:

Competency A: Principles and Practices of Visitor Studies

A All professionals involved in the practice of visitor research and evaluation should be familiar with the history, terminology, past and current developments, key current and historic publications, and major contributions of the field. Visitor studies professionals should also be familiar with major areas that have relevance to visitor studies, including evaluation, educational theory, environmental design, developmental psychology, communication theory, leisure studies, and marketing research.

Competency B: Principles and Practices of Informal Learning Environments

B All individuals who engage in visitor research and evaluation must understand the principles and practices of learning in informal environments, the characteristics that define informal learning settings, and an understanding of how learning occurs in informal settings. An understanding of the principles, practices, and processes by which these experiences are designed or created is required in order to make intelligent study interpretations and recommendations.

Competency C: Knowledge of and Practices with Social Science Research and Evaluation Methods and Analysis

C Visitor studies professionals must not only understand but also demonstrate the appropriate practice of social science research and evaluation methods and analysis. These include: Research design; Instrument/protocol design; Measurement techniques; Sampling; Data analysis; Data interpretation; Report writing and oral communication; Human subjects research ethics; and Research design, measurement, and analysis that shows sensitivity to diversity and diversity issues.

Competency D: Business Practices, Project Planning, and Resource Management

D Visitor studies professionals must possess appropriate skills for designing, conducting, and reporting visitor studies and evaluation research. Professionals should demonstrate their ability to conceptualize a visitor studies or evaluation research project in a context of informal learning institution management and administration (i.e., scheduling, budgeting, personnel, contracting).

Competency E: Professional Commitment

E Visitor studies professionals should commit to the pursuit, dissemination, and critical assessment of theories, studies, activities, and approaches utilized in and relevant to visitor studies. Through conference attendance and presentations, board service, journals and publications, and other formal and informal forums of communication, visitor studies professionals should support the continued development of visitor research and evaluation.

Registration is required



The World of Qualitative Inquiry

Elee Wood, Associate Professor of Museum Studies, Director of the Museum Studies Program, and Public Scholar of Museums, Families, and Learning, Indiana University, Randy Roberts, Assistant Director, Museum Administration and Operations, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art



Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado B



An Introduction to Phenomenology

Elee Wood, Associate Professor of Museum Studies, Director of the Museum Studies Program, and Public Scholar of Museums, Families, and Learning, Indiana University, Randy Roberts, Assistant Director, Museum Administration and Operations, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art



Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado B

FULL DAY Full Day Workshops 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Flexible Methods for Exhibit Formative Evaluation

Anna Lindgren-Streicher, Project Manager, Research & Evaluation, Clara Cahill, Research & Evaluation Associate, Museum of Science, Boston



To be held onsite at Explora Science Center and Children's Museum

HALF DAY Half Day Workshop 1 – 4 p.m.

Integrating Evaluation into your Daily Practice using Team-Based Inquiry

Sarah Cohn, Evaluation & Research Manager, Science Museum of Minnesota
Scott Pattison, Research & Evaluation Strategist, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Scott Randol, Research & Evaluation Associate, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry



Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado A

HALF DAY Half Day Workshops 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

How to Lead Evaluation Capacity Building Efforts using Team-Based Inquiry

Sarah Cohn, Evaluation & Research Manager, Science Museum of Minnesota
Scott Pattison, Research & Evaluation Strategist, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Scott Randol, Research & Evaluation Associate, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry



Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado A



Wednesday, July 16 Pre-Conference Workshops, Evening Events

Registration is required



Full Day Workshop 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

A Fresh Look at Using Experiments to do Visitor Studies

Ross Loomis, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Colorado State University



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado A](#)

Using Video in Your Project: A How-To Utilizing Museum Research and Evaluation Case Studies

Scott Van Cleave, Museum Evaluator II, Maggie Ryan Sandford, Museum Evaluator I, Science Museum of Minnesota



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado B](#)

Advocacy: Ensuring Research and Evaluation Results are Acted On

Kayte McSweeney, Audience Advocate and Researcher, Amelia Robinson, Audience Advocate and Researcher, Science Museum



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado C](#)



Half Day Workshops 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Using Interviews as a Program Development and Evaluation Tool with Children and Youth

Karen Sullenger, Professor, University of New Brunswick



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado F](#)

Survey Design: Writing Effective Questions

Al Onkka, Evaluation & Research Associate, Amy Grack Nelson, Senior

Evaluation & Research Associate, Science Museum of Minnesota



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado G](#)



Half Day Workshop 1 – 4 p.m.

Use of Validated Scales from the Social Sciences in Measuring Institutional Impact

Linda Wilson, Evaluation & Impact Assessment Consultant



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado F](#)



Interactive Data Collection Techniques for Informal Learning Environments

Amy Grack Nelson, Senior Evaluation & Research Associate, Zdana Tranby, Evaluation & Research Associate, Science Museum of Minnesota



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado G](#)

April Award Celebration at Seasons Grill (2031 Mountain Road Northwest) Wednesday, July 16 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

\$20 - \$40

You don't want to miss this event! Kick off the 2014 VSA conference in Albuquerque with an award celebration to remember. Each year, the April Award welcomes and honors one outstanding new professional to the field. The reception was so much fun last year, we're doing it again! Come toast this year's award recipient, meet up with friends and colleagues old and new, and support a longstanding VSA tradition. Additional donations get you extra drink tickets. This is a fundraiser to keep the April Award fund alive, so please give generously if you can.

Sponsored by the Albuquerque Museums

Opening Reception at Explora Science Center and Children's Museum Wednesday, July 16 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

\$45

Join VSA at Explora for a festive conference kick-off event. Explora is a new kind of learning place, providing real experiences with real things that put people's learning in their own hands. Explora's mission is to create opportunities for inspirational discovery and the joy of lifelong learning through interactive experiences in science, technology and art. Explora's exhibits, designed to engage visitors of all ages, are scaled small – most fit on tabletops. The parts are hand-sized and made for handling, with the intention that both the exhibit and the user are changed by the encounter.

Pre-registration is required. Event includes heavy appetizers and refreshments. Due to New Mexico regulations, alcohol will not be served at the museum. More information will be provided regarding drink tickets at Registration Desk. The museum and exhibits will be open for attendees.

Event hosted by Explora Science Center and Children's Museum.

Registration is required



Half Day Workshop
2 – 5 p.m.

**Interpretation, Presentation, and
Application of Tracking-and-Timing
Data**

*Beverly Serrell, Director, Serrell &
Associates*



Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado A



ALBUQUERQUE SKYLINE (Sergio Salvador)

MUSEUM STUDIES

at the George Washington University

THE NATION'S TOP MUSEUM TRAINING PROGRAM

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- M.A. or Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Exhibit Design
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THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Thursday, July 17 Conference Schedule

Presentation Formats

This year's conference features a variety of presentation formats. Please review the list below to learn more about the different types of presentations you can attend:



Conference Theme While we are excited about all of this year's sessions, this mark indicates the sessions that are especially aligned with the conference theme as determined by the 2014 Program Co-Chairs.



Panel Presentations / Forum Discussions Panel These presentations are full sessions

on a single theme. Each session includes several panelists who examine an issue, topic, problem, or theme from a variety of perspectives. Panel discussions reserve sufficient time in their sessions for audience discussion about the topic.



Paper Presentations

These sessions include 3 presentations on separate, but related, topics. Each speaker gives a 15-20 minute presentation about his/her project. Presenters reserve time for audience discussion about the topic.



Innovative Sessions Sessions of this type have proposed alternative, innovative formats

for their presentations, with the goal of increasing audience participation in support of furthering discussion of a key topic.



Roundtable Sessions These sessions feature two or more small group discussions

between presenters and attendees. The discussions will take place concurrently and attendees are welcome to rotate between conversations.



Poster Presentations Individual presenters provide graphic displays and are present for one-on-one discussions about specific studies or projects. All posters will be presented during a single session that will take place in the North Atrium on Friday, July 18 from 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

North Atrium

Sponsored by



Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.



RICHARD LEWIS MEDIA GROUP

Rockman et al

Research & Evaluation



9:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Welcome from VSA and President's Address

Join conference attendees and the VSA President in hearing about recent VSA activities and welcoming all to the conference.

[Alvarado D](#)

9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

**Opening Keynote
Dr. Ricardo Millett**

[Alvarado D](#)

Sponsored by



Ricardo Millett boasts a long career in providing program evaluation and strategic planning services to foundations and non-profits. He has spent a large part of his career advocating for and demonstrating the use of evaluation to stakeholders on both sides of the funding relationship. He was formerly President of The Woods Fund in Chicago, where he developed and implemented a strategic grantmaking plan for the foundation that served it well in responding to the needs of Chicago's least advantaged. Prior to working with the Woods Fund, Dr. Millett was Director of Program Evaluation for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. There, he focused on building greater communication and collaboration between evaluation and program staff to maximize the use of evaluation as an integral part



of programming. Before joining the Kellogg Foundation, Dr. Millett served as senior vice president of planning and resource management for the United Way of Massachusetts Bay in Boston. There, he was responsible for planning, allocation, and distribution of organizational resources to meet the needs of greater Boston.

**11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – I**

Research Agendas and Field-Wide Capacity Building

[Room Alvarado A](#)



Jessica Luke, University of Washington, James Bell,

Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE), Joe Heimlich, Ohio State University

A growing number of research agendas are under development across informal learning sectors. Why are these research agendas being created, for whom, and what role can they play in building field-wide capacity for research and evaluation? Explore these issues within the context of three specific research agenda efforts being developed by the Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE), the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), and the Association of Children's Museums (ACM).

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – I

CASCADING INFLUENCES: Long-Term Impacts of Informal STEM Experiences for Girls

[Room Alvarado B](#)



Dale McCreedy, *The Franklin Institute*, Lynn Dierking, *Oregon State University*

What are potential long-term impacts of informal STEM programs for girls? What did we learn about the process itself? This study documents women's retrospective reflections and perceptions about participation in girls-only STEM programs 5 to 25 years ago, and explores the potential long-term influences on young women's lives beyond STEM.

Building Capacity to Support Diversity in Visitor Studies

[Room Alvarado C](#)



Lisa Newton, *The Lawrence Hall of Science*, Patricia Campbell, *Campbell-Kibler Associates, Inc.*

New data and resources inform an overview of cultural competence in visitor studies, strategies for going beyond rigor in evaluation practice, and updates about the VSA affinity group to support pathways for diverse talent in visitor studies. Attendees will participate in an activity to inform future VSA resources and activities.



Theme: Applying Theory to Practice

[Room Alvarado F](#)

Theory of Intentionality: Supporting Impact-Driven Work

Randi Korn, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.

The Cycle of Intentional Practice is an ideal work cycle. To live on the Cycle requires significant individual and organizational behavior change; yet when followed, all will know the ways in which they have grown and changed, and what they have learned so they can improve their work moving forward.

Developmental Evaluation Builds Program Staff Capacity at Urban Advantage Denver

Maggie Miller, Maggie Miller Consulting on behalf of Denver Museum of Nature and Science

With Developmental Evaluation, the evaluator works with the client as facilitator and strategic learning partner; the evaluation process is one of constant learning. Learn how DE was used successfully with Urban Advantage Denver, a partnership among several museums and school districts designed to improve science literacy among middle-school science students.



Roundtables

[Room Alvarado D](#)

An Open Discussion of Design-Based Research in Visitor Studies

Scott Pattison, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Chris Cardiel, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Josh Gutwill, Exploratorium, Joyce Ma, Exploratorium, David Kanter, Kanter Learning Design & Research

Over the last 20 years, design-based research (DBR) has emerged as an important and influential research approach in education. Come join



this open conversation to share your experiences with DBR and discuss the potential for using this innovative approach in visitor studies and informal science education.

Measuring 21st Century Skills in Informal Learning Environments

Amy Grack Nelson, Science Museum of Minnesota, Emily Craig, Randi Korn & Associates

Much has been written about the importance of 21st century skills, but there are few tools and little guidance for measuring them. This roundtable will provide a forum for evaluators and researchers to discuss strategies they've used, instruments they've found, and challenges they've encountered in measuring these skills.

12:15 – 2:15 p.m.
Lunch on Your Own

12:15 – 1:45 p.m.
Professional Development Committee Meeting

[Alvarado A](#)

Communications Committee Meeting

[Alvarado B](#)

Membership Committee Meeting


[Alvarado C](#)

Thursday, July 17 Conference Schedule

2:15 – 3:30 p.m. Concurrent Session - II

Developing the Evaluator Pipeline: A Look at Teaching Visitor Studies


Room Alvarado A

 *Elee Wood, Indiana University-Indianapolis Museum Studies Program, Angie Ong, Spotlight Impact, LLC., Jill Stein, Lifelong Learning Group*

Over the past decade, Museum Studies and Museum Education programs have expanded to include courses in visitor studies practices and skills. Take a closer look at how students are being prepared for our field; compare teaching strategies; learn about applied training programs; share your thoughts and help shape future programs.

Math Engagement in Exhibits: What are We Learning?


Room Alvarado B

 *Scott Pattison, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Cecilia Garibay, Garibay Group, Josh Gutwill, Exploratorium, Andee Rubin, TERC*

This session explores findings from two recent math exhibit studies—Geometry Playground and Design Zone—that are helping us understand what math engagement looks like in designed informal learning environments, identify salient characteristics of visitor conversations that foster mathematical reasoning, and learn about strategies for assessing math engagement.

Consultant-Institution Partnerships for Strengthening Evaluation Capacity

Room Alvarado C

 *Sharisse Butler, Slover Linett Audience Research, Jennifer Borland, Rockman Et Al, Jessica Luke, University of Washington*

Practitioners have a growing awareness of the many ways ongoing

evaluation can support their work, and opportunities abound for institutions to partner with research consultants in order to equip their staffs to develop evaluation skills. Panelists representing both sides of a few such partnerships will share their diverse models.

Theme: New Technologies for Evaluation

Room Alvarado F

Co-Opting an App to Build Evaluation Capacity

Fran Mast, John G. Shedd Aquarium

“Hands-on” is the combination of education and entertainment with great learning potential. This presentation discusses the challenges inherent in studying this combination and describes how Shedd Aquarium co-opted an app designed for animal behavior observations and used it to expand the capacity of the Audience Research Department. Methods, analysis, and findings of this innovative study are discussed.

Evaluating Group Interactions with Innovative Technologies: Life on Earth

James Hammerman, STEM Education Evaluation Center (SEEC) at TERC, Inc.

This paper describes how an interactive observation protocol tool, and novel analytic methods contributed to the rigorous evaluation of group interactions at an interactive touch-table exhibit on evolution and common ancestry. Hierarchical modeling showed group size associated with dwell time which was, in turn, associated with increased knowledge.

Got Choice? A Game-Based Model for Learning Assessments

Doris Chin, Stanford Graduate School of Education, Daniel Schwartz, Stanford Graduate School of Education

The presenters are creating online games as assessments of learning processes. These games, called “choicelets,” highlight the importance of the choices children make as they decide when and how to learn. The presenters describe two games targeting different design- and science-focused learning skills: seeking feedback and data visualization.

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Coffee Break

North Atrium

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4:00 – 5:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions – III

Evaluation Capacity Building Models for Non-Evaluator Museum Professionals

Room Alvarado A

 *Anna Lindgren-Streicher, Museum of Science Boston, Sarah Cohn, Science Museum of Minnesota, Marley Steele-Inama, Denver Zoo, Nathan Richie, Golden History Museums, Juli Goss, Museum of Science Boston*

An increasing number of evaluators are training or mentoring practitioners in evaluating their own programs or practice. This session will feature evaluation capacity building efforts in national and regional networks, divisions within an institution, and a single project across multiple institutions. Approaches and tools will be shared.

Research on Organizational Change In and Across Science Museums

Room Alvarado B



Steve Guberman, Science Museum of Minnesota, Christine Reich, Museum of Science Boston, Scott Pattison, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota, Marta Beyer, Museum of Science Boston, Stephanie Iaciovelli, Museum of Science Boston

There are several trains of thought on the nature of change in museums but few empirical studies of the contexts and practices that facilitate or derail change. Researchers from three institutions present case studies of circumstances that facilitated or deterred change in and across a variety of science organizations.



Theme: Understanding Visitor Experience in Art Museums: from the whole visit to gallery design

Room Alvarado C

Old Masters to Remastered: Renovations at the Worcester Art Museum

Amy Cota-McKinley, Worcester State University

With the desire to improve traditional linear art displays, the Worcester Art Museum pursued an alternative design approach to encourage visitor interaction. Evaluation was conducted pre and post reinstallation of the Old Masters Gallery to determine effectiveness based upon tracking data and interviews.

Whole Visit Study at the Asian Art Museum

Steven Yalowitz, Audience Viewpoints Consulting

This session describes a whole visit study at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, providing a baseline understanding of the visitor experience. It included 150 whole visit timing and trackings paired with surveys and interviews; plus five focused exhibit studies looking in more detail at specific experiences.

New media use in art exhibitions: enriching or annoying?

Silke Kristin Dutz and Stephen Schwan, Knowledge Media Research Center (KMRC), Tuebingen, Germany

This paper explores the question, "What effects does the type of information presentation (a wall text next to a painting, an audio guide or a portable multimedia guide) have on visitors' behavior in an art exhibition, on cognitive aspects (knowledge acquisition, memory capacity) and on aesthetic judgment of the artwork?"



Working Session

Room Alvarado D

Deconstructing practice to build resources for the field

Joe Heimlich, Ohio State University, John Baek

A partnership project is leading to a need to deconstruct informal educational program evaluation. This session provides an opportunity for participants to critically reflect on their own work by considering micro-components necessary for a resource series for field-based educators, providing advice on the structure for the series, and potentially authoring documents.

6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

An Evening at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History - Reactions Welcome

\$45

Join VSA at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History. The Nuclear Museum is the nation's only congressionally chartered museum in its field and an intriguing place to learn the story of the Atomic Age, from early research of nuclear development through today's peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

Evening includes heavy appetizers and refreshments. Due to New Mexico regulations, alcohol will not be served at the museum. More information will be provided regarding drink tickets at Registration Desk. The museum and exhibits will be open for attendees. Transportation to and from the Museum will be provided.

Buses will leave promptly at 6:00 pm from the Hotel Albuquerque entrance.

Event hosted by the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History.



Friday, July 18 Conference Schedule

7:45 – 8:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

[North Atrium](#)

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Rockman et al
Research & Evaluation

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AUDIENCE RESEARCH

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

VSA Business Meeting

[Alvarado D](#)

Join fellow members and colleagues for the latest VSA news to find out what is in store for the organization in the coming year and vote on matters of importance to the Association. VSA President Joe Heimlich will discuss recent changes at VSA, including the work in organizational and strategic planning and growth for the future.

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

The State of the Field: An Invited Panel Discussion on Building Capacity for Evaluation in the Informal Learning Field

[Alvarado D](#)

Sponsored by

Joe E. Heimlich, Ph.D.

Rockman et al

Research & Evaluation

VSA has invited a panel of speakers to join a dialogue aimed at generating a "topographical map" of current evaluation capacity and capacity-building efforts across the informal learning field. Panelists representing a range of organizations focused on capacity building in the field will describe their organization's philosophy and current efforts toward capacity building. The moderator will then encourage dialogue between members of the panel as well as between the

panel and audience members with the ultimate goals of determining areas of the museum field where capacity-building efforts are concentrated and where there may be gaps, how the efforts at the level of member organizations are trickling down to the individual level (or not), and how those efforts are further shaping the museum field.

Joe Heimlich, Professor of OSU Extension at COSI and President of the Visitor Studies Association, will act as moderator for the panel discussion.

Panelists:

Christine Reich, Director of Exhibit Development and Conservation at the Museum of Science, Boston and immediate past chair of the Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE) at the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), will discuss the work of an established group within a field-wide member organization.

Jamie Bell, the Project Director and Principal Investigator of the Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE), will present the perspective of an organization focused on generating resources for wide-spread use.

Nette Pletcher, the Director of Conservation Education at the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), will contribute the perspective of a member organization working to build capacity through both member professional development and the establishment of a research agenda.

Ivonne Chand O'Neal, the Director of Research and Evaluation at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts and the chair of the Arts and Culture TIG for the American Evaluation Association (AEA), will speak to evaluation capacity building at the level of the arts and culture field.





10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Session – IV

Explore the BISE database of evaluation reports from informalscience.org


[Room Alvarado A](#)

  *Amy Grack Nelson*, Science Museum of Minnesota, *Kirsten Ellenbogen*, Great Lakes Science Center, *Sarah Cohn*, Science Museum of Minnesota, *Zdana Tranby*, Science Museum of Minnesota

The Building Informal Science (BISE) project has coded over 600 evaluation reports on informalscience.org and we are ready for you to explore our database! Come learn about the project, the coding structure we developed, and how you might use the freely available database for your own work.

Creating organizational change through embedded evaluation


[Room Alvarado B](#)

 *Elaine Horr*, Center for Research and Evaluation Associate at COSI, *Rita Deedrick*, Center for Research and Evaluation at COSI, *Joe Heimlich*, OSU Extension@COSI

How can evaluation be used to affect change in a museum beyond a single exhibit? How can organization-wide change occur without a large evaluation staff? This session engages the audience in an exploration of embedded evaluation to build organizational capacity – not for evaluation skills per se – but for organizational change.

Comparing and Contrasting Digital and Paper-based Modes of Visitor Observation



[Room Alvarado C](#)

 Jennifer Borland, Rockman et Al, Beverly Serrell, Serrell and Associates, Steven Yalowitz, Audience Viewpoints Consulting, Camellia Sanford, Rockman et Al

In recent years, digital technologies have created opportunities for researchers to collect observation data digitally via handheld, wireless devices. This session explores the benefits and challenges of digital data collection through a variety of examples exploring the benefits and challenges in comparison to paper-based modes of data collection that have been a long-time staple of visitor studies.

Action Research in Zoos and Aquariums: Reflections from Multiple Perspectives

[Room Alvarado F](#)

  Amy Niedbalski, Saint Louis Zoo, Lynn Dierking, Oregon State University, Jim Kiesel, California State University, Wayne Warrington, Phoenix Zoo

The Zoo and Aquarium Action Research Collaborative is an NSF-funded collaboration among staff at six zoos and aquariums, who carried out action research projects, and informal science education researchers, who acted as mentors. This panel discussion features reflections on the project from the perspectives of two mentors and two participants.

 **Roundtables**

[Room Alvarado D](#)

Using an indoor positioning system to automate visitor tracking

Joyce Ma, Exploratorium

This roundtable presentation describes the lessons learned in year one of a two-year project investigating ways an indoor positioning system can automate the collection of visitor movement data in an interactive science center.

Evaluation Toolkits: Passing Trend or Promising Progression?

Joy Kubarek-Sandor, John G. Shedd Aquarium, Ardice Hartry, University of California Berkeley

How many times this year have you heard the phrase “evaluation toolkit?” Have you used such a toolkit? This roundtable will explore different toolkit models, content, successes, challenges, and potential next steps. What needs to be included in a toolkit? How can toolkits improve access to high-quality evaluation?

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
Lunch on Your Own

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting

[Alvarado G](#)

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Conference Planning Committee Meeting

[Alvarado A](#)

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Board Development Committee Meeting

[Alvarado B](#)

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.


Development Committee Meeting

[Alvarado C](#)

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.
Concurrent Session – V

Rethinking the Language of Evaluation to Promote Inclusion of Diverse Audiences



[Room Alvarado A](#)

 Jill Stein, Lifelong Learning Group, Shelly Valdez, Native Pathways, Joe Heimlich, Lifelong Learning Group

This innovative session explores the “language of evaluation” and how language can foster (or hinder) the relationships we build with communities and other stakeholders, including the validity of our work. Presenters will share examples of language used in evaluation and lead a reflective, participatory activity to help advance the field.

Creating Systems that Support Evaluation of Institutional Outcomes

[Room Alvarado B](#)

  Claire Thoma, Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, Elee Wood, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Sheila Brommel, Minnesota Historical Society, Erica Orton, Minnesota Historical Society

Panelists will discuss how the identification of institutional outcomes has supported systems of evaluation—including coordinating program and exhibit development, generating staff buy-in, building evaluation tools, and reporting (and using) findings. Participants will be invited to discuss models that could be useful for their own institutions or clients.

 **Conference Theme**

 **Panel Presentations / Forum Discussions Panel**

 **Paper Presentations**

 **Innovative Sessions**

 **Roundtable Sessions**

 **Poster Presentations**

Friday, July 18 Conference Schedule

1:45 – 3:00 p.m. Concurrent Session – V

Sharing Results Internally: Infusing Your Discoveries Into Your Institution

Room Alvarado C



Stephen Ashton, Thanksgiving Point Institute

We often discover great findings from our research and evaluation studies, but how often do our findings get shared within our own institutions? This session will not only look at how information can be shared internally, but session attendees will participate in a mock community of practice “share out” session.



Theme: Exploring Projects and Theories in Pursuit of Global Relevancy

Room Alvarado F

A Case Study in Globally Relevant Programming and Evaluation Metrics

Ellen Bechtol, Hurvis Center for Learning Innovation and Collaboration, Lincoln Park Zoo

The Observe to Learn program utilizes a freely available app that facilitates animal behavior (ethology) studies. Lincoln Park Zoo has partnered with seven institutions throughout the world to deliver this program and develop consistent evaluation metrics. We will present recent results and reflect on the processes/outcomes of this program.

Using Evaluation to Develop New Adult Learning Approaches in Museums

Ruth Cohen, American Museum of Natural History, Jennifer Borland, Rockman Et Al

The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and Rockman Et Al will present and engage VSA participants in evaluation results of recent museum-designed initiatives in adult learning.

Findings will be put in context of implications for the broader field both programmatically and for further research.

3:15 – 4:15 p.m. Coffee Break

North Atrium

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3:15 – 4:15 p.m.



Poster Session

North Atrium

Understanding Visitors' Nostalgic Responses and Long-term Memories in Museums

David Anderson, University of British Columbia, Hiroyuki Shimizu, Kobe Gakuin University, Makiko Yuasa, Hokkaido University Museum

This session reports research about visitors' nostalgic responses to museum experiences and objects, and will discuss a) the kinds of museum objects/experiences that evoke visitors' nostalgic responses, b) how the object type influences the nostalgic response and their recalled memories.

Application of John Falk's Museum Visitor Identities at Thanksgiving Point

Stephen Ashton, Thanksgiving Point Institute

For the past two years, Thanksgiving Point Institute has been collecting data from its guests regarding the guests' museum visitor identities as described by John Falk (explorer, facilitator, experience seeker, professional /

hobbyist, and recharger). The results have shown interesting guest trends at Thanksgiving Point's museums, gardens, and farm.

Camera Traps and Teens – An Introduction to Partners in Fieldwork

Ellen Bechtol, Hurvis Center for Learning Innovation and Collaboration, Lincoln Park Zoo

The Partners in Fieldwork initiative provides high school students the opportunity to collect data from a field station they set up at their school. Learn more about this collaborative partnership between Chicago-area schools and Lincoln Park Zoo's Urban Wildlife Institute and Hurvis Center for Learning Innovation and Collaboration.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned from Evaluation of Explore Library Program

Marti Canipe, Planetary Science Institute

This presentation will share the outcomes and lessons learned from the evaluation of the Explore Library Program, an in-person and online training program designed to support librarians in bringing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programming to all ages, including results from a follow-up survey of ten years of participants.

CASNET: Exploring Evaluation Capacity-Building within a Complex Adaptive System

Amy Grack Nelson, Science Museum of Minnesota, Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota, Scott Pattison, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

How and why does evaluation capacity spread (or fail to spread) across interconnected organizations and institutions? Team members on the NSF PRIME-funded Complex Adaptive Systems as a Model for Network

Evaluations (CASNET) project will discuss the work being done to help answer this increasingly vital question.

Exploring Gender Differences in a Science & History Gallery

Allison Cosby, Conner Prairie Interactive History Park

This poster presentation focuses on the ways we have explored differences in behavior among children of different genders in a history and science gallery at Conner Prairie. This project has informed our interpretive strategies in the gallery and has allowed a graduate fellow to build her capacity to conduct evaluation.

Playdates: How Evaluation Helped us Better Engage our Youngest Visitors

Lynn Courtney, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

This poster presents a survey of adult participants in Playdates, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's program for toddlers. The study provided insight into learning and engagement of our youngest visitors, raised questions about appropriate teaching strategies for toddlers, and led to actionable strategies for improving an already popular program.

Knowledge Management Project: Maximizing the Impact of Evaluation

Emily Craig, Randi Korn & Associates, Dana Burns, The United States Holocaust

This poster presentation addresses one approach to how institutions can build capacity for utilizing existing evaluations. Citing the work of RK&A and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, this project asks the question: What greater meanings can an institution take away from more than 20 years of research and evaluation?

Interpretation and Visitors: Building a Body of Institutional Knowledge

Lynn Courtney, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

This presentation draws on recent studies of visitor response to interpretive resources in a large encyclopaedic art museum to prompt discussion of how building a body of institutional knowledge through evaluative studies can build capacity for evaluation by increasing demand among institutional stakeholders and creating efficiencies through generalizable study results.

A Framework for Evaluation Quality: Evidence for its Viability

Alice Fu, SK Partners

The authors will present empirical evidence bearing on the viability of our quality framework for summative evaluation. They will discuss the implications of findings from a case study of an exemplary evaluation and its uses, interviews with leaders in the field, and a review of evaluation reports.

Working with Volunteers to Create Institutional Buy-in for Implementing Results

Andrea Giron, Denver Museum of Nature & Science

This poster will focus on how the Evaluation Department at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science took a unique approach to sharing evaluation results with volunteers, creating an action plan to engage the volunteers in implementing the results, and creating space for the volunteers to provide staff with feedback.

Full Spectrum Science: Successful Strategies in Engaging Latina Girls in STEM Programs

Ivel Gontan, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

This poster explores effective programmatic strategies for providing science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) content for underrepresented girls in informal learning environments. The findings yielded strategies that were effective in developing curriculum and building internal capacity that science museums could emulate in efforts to become more accessible to underrepresented audiences.

Perception of Contemporary Art in Younger and Older Adults

Andrea Granell, Boston College

This study evaluates younger and older adults' response to contemporary art under two viewing conditions: without labels; and with labels and the opportunity to discuss their reactions to the work with a partner. It is hypothesized that responses will be qualitatively different in the two conditions.

New Challenges for Exhibit Evaluation: The Modern Medicine Show

Steven Guberman, Science Museum Minnesota, Gretchen Haupt, Science Museum of Minnesota, Maggie Sandford, Science Museum of Minnesota

We present three dilemmas that emerged in our work on a new exhibition intended to improve visitors' ability to make informed healthcare decisions: (a) fun and exciting versus serious and personal, (b) using historical objects to address contemporary issues, and (c) science versus other ways of knowing.

Friday, July 18 Conference Schedule

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.



Poster Session
North Atrium

The Prairie Science Professional Network: Evaluating Professional Impacts

Gretchen Haupt, Science Museum of Minnesota

Prairie Science brings together staff from history and science centers to develop a model demonstrating how historic sites can integrate science-focused activities with the historical stories they interpret while creating a professional network that supports STEM at historic sites. This poster presents how the presenters measured professional impacts within the network.

Safari Adventure: Designing and Evaluating for Better Connections to Nature

Sarah Edmunds, Wildlife Conservation Society

The Wildlife Conservation Society has been working with an IMLS grant to support the development of a groundbreaking new family exhibit aimed at better connecting urban families to nature, as well as exploring the possibilities for zoo experiences to enhance intergenerational learning.

Why is this here?

Emily Izzo, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Elizabeth Quay, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Laura Weiss, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

“Why is this here?” pilot tested a collections assessment process using objects from The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis to determine how the objects are of interest, importance and value to the family learning mission for the museum. Results indicated that memorable objects were more important than familiar ones.

Harbor Seal Exhibit Summative Evaluation at the Seattle Aquarium

Anna Johnson, University of Washington, Julia Miller, University of Washington, Kelley Staab, University of Washington, Lauren Marallo, University of Washington

This project is a summative evaluation of the Seattle Aquarium’s newly renovated Harbor Seal Exhibit. Students participating in the New Directions for Audience Research Initiative at the University of Washington are implementing the evaluation with the goal of describing visitors’ use of the exhibit and awareness of conservation messages.

Math Attitudes and Identities of Adults in Science Center Programs

Anna Johnson, University of Washington

This research explores the math attitudes and math identities of participants in adult programs at science centers. This work is being conducted by a graduate student as thesis research for the Museology Master’s Program at the University of Washington.

Building Capacity through Interdisciplinary Cooperation: Experimental Research on Reception Practice

Annette Loeseke, Museum Consultant

Content- or visitor-centered research categories do not seem fully appropriate to address currently changing reception practices. Instead, we need experimental research methods to evaluate cognitive as well as non-cognitive dimensions of reception and fully engage in developing new products and formats that respond to changing reception practices of today’s audiences.

The Value of Early Childhood Professionals in Research and Evaluation

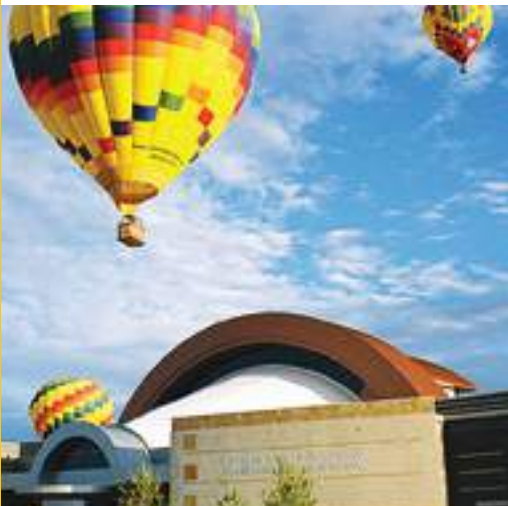
Stacy Niemiec, John G. Shedd Aquarium, Erikson Institute

The purpose of this poster is to highlight museums, zoos, and aquariums as early learning spaces and to underscore the importance of researching young visitor’s experiences. At Shedd Aquarium, child development knowledge coupled with research and evaluation methodology allows for a deeper understanding of the early learning experience.

Parent-Child Interactions that Foster Science Interest before School

Scott Pattison, Oregon State University, Lynn Dierking, Oregon State University

Interest development is a growing focus of attention in informal science education and visitor studies. In this poster presentation, we report on a mixed-method research study to explore parent-child interactions and discourse across a range of settings, including museums and science centers, that contribute to early childhood science interest development.



Science on the Move: Design-Based Research Outside Institution Walls

Scott Pattison, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Marcie Benne, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Chris Cardiel, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

Thinking of taking your informal learning experiences outside the walls of your institution? Stop by to hear about a project that focused on creative evaluation and research strategies in nontraditional contexts and explore some tools and resources that might be useful in your own work!

Drawing on prior experience to catalyze evaluation capacity building

Rich Pennington, Science Museum of Minnesota, Zdanna Tranby, Science Museum of Minnesota, Gina Svarovsky, Science Museum of Minnesota

In order to build evaluation capacity in more inviting ways, we must consider the skills and knowledge potential evaluators have developed through previous professional, and life, experiences. At this poster, a new evaluator will share his pathway into the field, and the role prior experience plays in his work.

Getting to Know Family Audiences: Evaluating Family-Oriented Programming at MOHAI

Emily Schmierer, University of Washington, Amanda Dearolph, University of Washington

When the Museum of History and Industry moved to a new location, they acquired a new audience: family groups. To better understand these groups, our evaluation studied their motivations for visiting the museum and how they access and engage with new resources made available to them.

Designing a Tablet Support Tool for Interpreters

Brian Slattery, University of Illinois at Chicago

The authors present findings from the iterative design of a novel tablet support tool (TST) that we have created to support interpretation of an interactive exhibit at Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, IL. This includes using the TST for collaborative meaning-making and inquiry, and we discuss the TST's potential range of uses.

Building Capacity Through Academic Partnerships

Amelia Robinson, Science Museum, London

In a time when resources are stretched conducting research and evaluation can be challenge. This presentation explores the benefits for the Science Museum in London in forming academic partnerships in order to conduct rigorous research.

The Role of Front-end Research to Increase Capacity

Amelia Robinson, Science Museum, London

Front-end research at the Science Museum has shown that science can often be a subject audiences find challenging. This session will explore how research has led to the Museum taking innovative approaches from the start of a project to overcome barriers to engagement for their audience.

Henry Art Gallery Formative Evaluation of Lobby Experience and Resource Materials

Emily Shin, University of Washington Museology Graduate Program, Taline Kuyumjian, University of Washington

Museology Graduate Program, Andrew Bowen, University of Washington Museology Graduate Program

University of Washington Museology graduate students developed this evaluation to understand the effectiveness of the Henry's lobby resources in orienting visitors to the museum, providing visit information about admissions & exhibitions, and providing additional information about program offerings. Results will inform design and structure of future resources at the Henry.

Conversations with Elementary Age Children about History and STEM

Amanda Svantesson-DeGidio, Science Museum of Minnesota, Al Onkka, Science Museum of Minnesota

Methodology in measuring and assessing children's understandings of the nature of science is generally reserved for standardized testing. This poster will showcase a series of family interviews and rich conversations at an innovative exhibit called Create. Connect, which combines STEM-based activities with a historical context and historical interpretation.

Calorie Counting Bikes and Talking Toilets: a children's museum exhibit

Christina Zarcadoolas, City University of NY School of Public Health

The authors studied the Children's Museum of Manhattan's EatSleepPlay™ exhibit to better understand children's engagement and learning. Methods included videotaping, ethnography, exit interviews with 87 children (4-8) and parent surveys. Findings revealed opportunities to improve child learning through more purposeful parent mediation, reframing function of signage, and extending reach through post-visit digital communications.

Friday, July 18 Conference Schedule

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.



Poster Session

North Atrium

Instrument Development and Validation: A Tool for More Rigorous Evaluation

Lei Zhao, John G. Shedd Aquarium

Evaluators, particularly internal ones, often need to develop instruments to measure program and exhibit outcomes. The current poster will address the process of instrument development and validation, which ensures quality of measuring evaluation outcomes at Shedd. Besides internal consistency, construct validity of an instrument was examined to fulfill validation needs.

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Get to Know VSA Happy Hour

QBar Lounge, Hotel Albuquerque

Free (pre-registration is required)

VSA's Membership Committee invites new attendees and all members for a happy hour at the Hotel Albuquerque. This is an informal way to meet and chat with other members and VSA leaders to learn about VSA committees.

Pre-registration is required for this event. Hors d'oeuvres provided, cash bar available.



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Welcome to the 2014 Visitor Studies Association Conference!

Indianapolis awaits you in 2015. We invite you to visit The Children's Museum of Indianapolis while you are there.

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Saturday, July 19 Conference Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

North Atrium

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9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions – VI

“Everything looks different!”

Embracing complexity in multi-sited projects

Room Alvarado A



Dolly Hayde, Lifelong Learning Group, Shelly Valdez, Native Pathways, Cecelia Garibay, Garibay Group, Juli Goss, Museum of Science Boston, Jill Stein, Lifelong Learning Group

Collaboration can lead to great outcomes—and also great complexity. Presenters discuss how using flexible, holistic approaches in multi-sited projects has helped maintain evaluative focus and meaningful stakeholder involvement while respecting the particularity of individual communities and contexts. Attendees then discuss their own perspectives, examples, and questions in breakout groups.



Conference Theme



Panel Presentations / Forum Discussions Panel



Paper Presentations



Innovative Sessions



Roundtable Sessions



Poster Presentations

SAVE THE DATE: Ed U. Cation and Reese Urch are getting married!

Room Alvarado B



Nette Pletcher, Association of Zoos & Aquariums

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums cordially invites you to celebrate the wedding of Ed U. Cation and Reese Erch. The celebration will include toasts honoring the seven questions this happy couple explored together and an opportunity to wish them a prolific future.

Strategies for Professionalizing the Field of Visitor Studies

Room Alvarado C



Barbara Butler, Larry Bell, Museum of Science Boston, Nick Visscher, University of Washington Museology Graduate Program

The intellectual value and practical worth of the work in our field would be advanced if we could move collectively toward a more professional state, with standard competencies for informal education evaluators and a voluntary registry system for professionals designed to build the capacity of the visitor studies field.

Growing Up Isn't Easy: Developing Systems to Grow Institutional Capacity

Room Alvarado E



Lindsay Maldonado, John G. Shedd Aquarium, Nicole Rivera, North Central College, Joy Kubacheck-Sandor, John G. Shedd Aquarium

How can we build evaluation capacity within our institution when resources are limited? This session will explore three strategies commonly used in developing institutional capacity, how these have been applied at Shedd Aquarium, and investigate the potential

for use in other institutions. Three areas will be discussed: Academic partnerships; volunteer recruitment & training; and empowering internal staff.

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions – VII

Understanding Institutional Culture: Tools for Cultivating a Welcoming Visitor Environment

Room Alvarado A



Azuka MuMin, COSI, Andrea Moto, Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, Joe Heimlich, OSU Extension @ COSI, Steve Yalowitz, Audience Viewpoints Consulting

How do we create an internal culture where staff feels valued, respected, and confident; and in turn cultivate welcoming environments for diverse audiences? This interactive workshop will encourage reflection, discussion, and analysis to challenge our institutional habits and learn from each other to support diverse needs of staff and visitors.

Building evaluation capacity in museums through university partnerships

Room Alvarado B



Nick Visscher, University of Washington Museology Graduate Program, Jim Kiesel, California State University Long Beach, Theano Moussouri, University College London Institute of Archaeology

Professionals from four universities describe courses that engage museums and similar institutions to provide graduate students with real-world evaluation experience. Panellists will discuss underlying goals, constraints and shared challenges; attendees will be invited to consider how such collaborations might be improved to better build individual and institutional evaluation capacity.



Theme: Novel Avenues of Visitor Studies

[Room Alvarado C](#)

Micro-experiments for fast, actionable data about the museum experience

Erin Gong, Independent Consultant, Michelle Maghari, Crocker Art Museum

Museums increasingly see the value of formative evaluation. This presentation takes the next step by exploring options for light-weight experiments. Our goal is fast and simple data collection that drives actionable insights. Drawing on lessons learned from many experiments, this presentation shares practical principles for making the most of micro-experiments.

Perceived Atmosphere: a novel way for characterizing exhibition environments

Regan Forrest, University of Queensland

This paper describes the development of a quantitative instrument for eliciting how visitors perceive individual exhibition environments. Based on techniques successfully piloted in retail environments, Perceived Atmosphere offers a novel and easy to administer research tool for characterizing exhibition environments in meaningful ways.

Co-Creation and Evaluation: measuring the internal impact of public engagement

Kayte McSweeney, Science Museum London

At the Science Museum London, the response from visitors to co-creation is paramount but much research has been done looking inward and assessing the impact of the approach on the institution. Can Visitor Research successfully adapt its methodologies to

meet the demand for evaluation that's inevitably for visitors, but not with them?

Telling the visitor story: Bringing UX design techniques into Evaluation

[Room Alvarado E](#)



Stephanie Mabadi, Dallas Museum of Art, Perot Museum of Nature and Science

This session will present an important tool common in the User Experience field for telling user stories called the affinity diagram, or affinity wall, and discuss the value of using this tool for visitor studies and evaluation - how to create and use it. We will discuss multiple ways to use the affinity diagram to tell visitor stories, disseminate data internally, brainstorm new or improved experiences for your visitors, and as a demonstration of the value of evaluation in a public, interesting, utilitarian format.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Closing Luncheon & Plenary

Free (pre-registration is required)

[Room Alvarado D](#)

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Join colleagues for a last hurrah and an opportunity to gather your thoughts after several scintillating days of presentations. Speak with colleagues about your own reflections on ideas related to building capacity for evaluation and hear about potential next steps that conference conversations have sparked for a few of VSA's leaders. As lunch is served, attendees will be invited to reflect on their conference experience and next steps they are interested in taking to

build capacity with those around their tables.

Each of the following individuals will spend 5-7 minutes reflecting briefly on key personal insights from the conference and then reflecting on ways in which the conference proceedings have sparked or informed next steps for VSA from her point of view.

Dale McCreedy, VSA Past President

Kimberly Kiehl, VSA President-elect

Marcie Benne, Chair VSA Membership Committee

Elisa Israel, Chair VSA Professional Development Committee

Pre-registration is required for this event. Event includes food and refreshments.

NEW!
Post-Conference Workshop

Registration is required



Half Day Workshop
2 – 5 p.m.

Interpretation, Presentation, and Application of Tracking-and-Timing Data

Beverly Serrell, Director, Serrell & Associates



[Hotel Albuquerque: Alvarado A](#)

Competency A: Principles and Practices of Visitor Studies

Competency B: Principles and Practices of Informal Learning Environments

Competency C: Knowledge of and Practices with Social Science Research and Evaluation Methods and Analysis

VSA Conference Team

Special thanks to our conference team, whose time, energy, and dedicated service has enabled VSA to present such a fantastic event.

2014 Conference Team

Eli Bossin, Association Manager

Rita Deedrick, Development Committee Liaison

Jen DeWitt, Workshop Team Member

Valerie Grabski, Abstracts Editor

Tamara Grybko, Local Host Coordinator

Gretchen Haupt, Workshop Team Member

Dolly Hayde, April Awards Subcommittee Member

Elisa Israel, Professional Development Committee Liaison

Amy Grack Nelson, Workshop Team Chair

Michelle Maghari, April Awards Subcommittee Member

Sara Martinez, Membership Committee Liaison

Leah Reisman, April Awards Subcommittee Member

Camellia Sanford, Conference Planning Committee Chair

Kathleen Tinworth, April Awards Subcommittee Chair

Claire Thoma, Program Co-Chair

Rachel Veracka, Local Host Committee

Linda Wilson, Program Co-Chair

Elee Wood, Conference Planning Committee Vice-Chair

2014 Workshop Proposal Reviewers

Elsa Bailey

Karyn Bertschi

Steve Bitgood

Jennifer Borland

Sarah Cohn

Rita Deedrick

Amy Grack Nelson

Jennifer Holland

Kim Kiehl

Anna Lindgren-Streicher

Dale McCreedy

Nick Visscher

Linda Wilson

2014 Session Proposal Reviewers

David Anderson

Stephen Ashton

Marta Beyer

Stephen Bitgood

Lindzy Bivings

Minda Borun

Donna Braden

Sheila Brommel

Sharisse Butler

Chris Cadenhead

Lynne Carmichael

Tammy Cherry

Lynn Courtney

Rita Deedrick

Mike Flynn

Ly Foor

Susan Foutz

Ellen Giusti

Kate Haley Goldman

Steve Guberman

Preeti Gupta

Joshua Gutwill

Dolly Hayde

Tiffany Leason

Jerry Luebke

Jessica Luke

Kayte McSweeney

Lisa Newton

Sigrid Norris

Jan Packer

Phyllis Rabineau

Leah Reisman

Michael Rose

Camellia Sanford

Jessica Sickler

Matt Sikora

Rebekah Sobel

Jill Stein

Nicole Stutzman

Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert

Mary Jane Taylor

Loreen Trainer

Maia Werner-Avidon

Kari Williams

Karen Wizevich

Mary Ann Wojton

Elee Wood

Steve Yalowitz

Renae Youngs

The logo for the Visitor Studies Association (VSA) features the letters 'VSA' in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. The 'V' and 'S' are connected, and the 'A' is slightly larger and positioned to the right.

Visitor Studies Association

www.visitorstudies.org

Thank You to our 2014 Conference Donors and Sponsors

The 27th Annual Visitor Studies Association Conference is supported by businesses, organizations, and individuals committed to understanding and serving visitors in informal learning environments. Please support those whose work furthers VSA's vision of a world where lifelong learning is embraced, and where learning in informal settings benefits individuals, communities, and society at large.

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Special thanks to the following volunteers whose time, energy, and dedicated service have enabled VSA to increase the scope and quality of its service to the field.

THE VSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2013 – 2015

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Vice Chair: Anna Lindgren-Streicher

Members: Betty Dunckel, Julie Johnson, Rebekah Sobel, and Janet Rassweiler

The Board Development Committee is charged with ensuring effective board governance of the Association. The committee is responsible for overseeing elections, monitoring and assessing board processes, structures and roles, and providing board members with the tools and support needed to fulfill their board duties.

Specific responsibilities include: developing a board slate that meets the strategic needs of the organization; reviewing board and committee structures and related policies; planning on-going professional development for new and existing board members; and recognizing board members for their contributions.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Randi Korn

Vice Chair: Lynn Courtney

Members: Rita Deedrick, Kim Kiehl, Robert "Mac" West, and Mira Zirgani

The Development Committee is charged with raising money to support the work of VSA. The Development Committee works with other committees to understand resource needs so it can raise dollars accordingly. Committee members design, manage, and execute fund raising strategies to encourage charitable donations, advertising, and conference sponsorships.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vice President: Jessica Luke

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Camellia Sanford

Vice Chair: Elee Wood

Members: Ly Foor

This group is the major workforce behind the annual conference. The Conference Planning Committee (CPC) is responsible for ensuring that the annual conference is designed to serve VSA's mission, strategic direction, and members. The CPC oversees the direction and logistics of planning for VSA's current and future annual conferences. The CPC also oversees and advises the annual Conference Team as they prepare for each conference. A new Team is created for each year's conference, consisting of the Association Manager, Program Co-Chairs, local VSA members, and representatives from other VSA committees. The CPC provides guidance and continuity between each year's planning processes.

NON-CONFERENCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Elisa Israel

Vice Chair: Jennifer Borland

Members: Elsa Bailey, Lindzy Bivings, Jen DeWitt, Michelle Maghari, Amy Grack Nelson, Gretchen Haupt, Dolly Hayde, Jennifer Holland, Leah Reisman, Saul Rockman, Kathleen Tinworth, and Nick Visscher

The Professional Development Committee is responsible for providing training and growth opportunities for VSA members and other informal learning professionals. Specifically, the committee is charged with the following responsibilities: pre-conference workshops; regional workshops; awards and scholarships; and professional standards.

OUTREACH

Vice President: Robert Breck

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Gina Svarovsky

Vice Chair: Elizabeth Bolander

Members: Sarah Cohn, Jim Kisiel, Lesley Langa, Andrea Michelbach, Amy Niedbalski, Carrie Plank, and Liz Rosino

The Communications Committee is charged with developing compelling information about the Visitor Studies Association as well as content about the overall field of visitor studies for members and the broader visitor studies community. The committee comprises three working groups: website and publications; interactive/social media; and strategic communications. The committee also provides a liaison to the editorial board of VSA's journal, *Visitor Studies*.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Marcie Benne

Vice Chair: Maia Werner-Avidon

Members: Patience Baach, Andrea Giron, Sara Martinez, Lindsay Maldonado, Patty Montaña, Lisa Newton, Meghan Schiedel, Renae Youngs

The Membership Committee strives to create accessible and inclusive pathways for joining and engaging with VSA. The committee co-develops a variety of resources and activities to help members get acquainted with each other, share expertise, develop VSA competencies, create VSA experiences, and collaborate to advance the field.

The letters 'VSA' are rendered in a large, light blue, hollow outline font, centered at the bottom of the page. The 'V' and 'S' are connected at the top, and the 'A' is positioned to the right of the 'S'.



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In Memoriam: Alan J. Friedman



15 November 1942 - 8 May 2014

Leader in informal learning

Mentor to the field

Friend to us all

VSA

Visitor Studies Association

You will be missed, Alan.

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Fort Selden Historic Site

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Scrimosaurus and Spangolaponee were overlaid to the
Age of Sopor Giants exhibition at the New Mexico Museum of
Natural History and Science. Photo courtesy NMNH / DCA.