

# The Data Revolution



# VSA

Visitor Studies Association

29th Annual Visitor Studies  
Association Conference

July 19-23, 2016  
Boston, MA

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# Conference Schedule at a Glance

## Monday, July 18

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Registration Open

## Tuesday, July 19

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**  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m. **Wine and Work Workshop**

## Wednesday, July 20

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration Open  
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Pre-Conference Workshops**  
12:00 – 4:00 p.m. **VSA Board of Directors Meeting**  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. **Wine and Work Workshop**  
4:30 – 6:00 p.m. **Data Viz Focused Interest Group**  
**Slide Clinic**  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m. **April Award Celebration**  
*(ticket required)*  
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. **Special Session with Institute for Museum and Library Services**

## Thursday, July 21

7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Registration Open  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Coffee Break  
8:45 – 9:15 a.m. **Welcome from VSA and President's Address**  
9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Opening Keynote**  
10:30 – 11:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions I**  
11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. **Focused Interest Group Lunch**  
11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. Lunch on Your Own  
12:30 – 1:30 p.m. **Committee Meetings**  
2:00 – 3:15 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions II**  
3:15 – 3:45 p.m. Coffee Break

3:45 – 5:00 p.m.  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

**Concurrent Sessions III**  
**Get to Know VSA Happy Hour**  
**Dining Discussions**  
**Informal Evening Activities**

## Friday, July 22

7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Registration Open  
7:30 – 8:30 a.m. Coffee Break  
7:30 – 8:00 a.m. **Focused Interest Group**  
**Meet and Greet**  
**VSA Business Meeting**  
**Keynote Speaker**  
**Concurrent Sessions IV**  
**Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting**  
**Ambassador Lunch**  
Lunch on Your Own  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Committee Meetings**  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions V**  
12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Coffee Break  
1:45 – 3:00 p.m. **VSA Poster Session and Silent Auction Close**  
3:15 – 4:45 p.m. **Dinner and Museum Circulator**  
*(ticket required)*  
3:15 – 4:45 p.m. **Museum Circulator** *(ticket required)*  
5:30 – 9:30 p.m.  
6:00 – 9:30 p.m.

## Saturday, July 23

7:30 – 9:00 a.m. Coffee Break  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Committee Meetings**  
9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions VI**  
10:30 – 11:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions VII**  
12:00 – 1:30 p.m. **Closing Luncheon & Keynote**  
*(ticket required)*  
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. **CAISE Knowledgebase Edit-a-thon**  
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. **Post-Conference Workshops**

*Boston photography courtesy of Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau.*





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# WELCOME

## VSA Conference Team

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.

## 2016 Conference Team

**Jason Allen**, April Awards and Scholarships Committee

**Ellen Bechtol**, Program Co-Chair

**Sarah Cohn**, Association Manager

**Allison Cosbey**, Program Co-Chair

**Lynn Courtney**, Development Committee Liaison

**Sara Davis**, Membership Committee Liaison

**Juliette Fritsch**, Local Host Committee

**Emily Fry**, Local Host Committee

**Valerie Grabski**, Abstracts Editor

**Taline A. Kuyumjian**, April Awards and Scholarships Chair

**Anna Lopez**, Workshop Co-Chair

**Sarah May**, Local Host Committee

**Leigh Ann Mesiti**, Local Host Committee

**Julia Miller**, Workshop Co-Chair

**Camellia Sanford**, Conference Planning Committee Chair

**Claire Thoma Emmons**, Program Co-Chair

**Lauren Wilson**, April Awards and Scholarships Committee

**Elee Wood**, Vice President of Professional Development

*Thanks to so many of you for being session and poster reviewers. Your time is what makes this conference so informative and engaging!*

Dear Visitor Studies Conference Attendees:

Welcome to Boston for the 29th Annual Conference of the Visitor Studies Association! The theme of *The Data Revolution* is particularly appropriate for this year's host city. This year's sessions, speakers, and workshops offer a chance for you to discuss new findings, discover new methods, and explore how the nature of our work is changing in an age of expanding access and exposure to data.

## The Data Revolution

Data has always been at the heart of what we do. However, as our world becomes more connected than ever before, a massive amount of information is being generated, collected and studied as we enter a new era of Big Data. Along with the promise of this Data Revolution come challenges- how can we collect and make meaning of large amounts of data with limited resources? What are the best strategies for communicating data to our stakeholders? How should we pool our data, and our expertise, to offer insights into visitor experiences across our institutions? In addition to offering new findings and methods, the speakers and presentations at this year's conference will consider these and other questions about the present and future implications of collecting, interpreting, and communicating data in our field.

## Our Boston Hosts

Welcome to Beantown, The Cradle of Liberty, Capital of Red Sox Nation— however you like to say it, we're glad you're here! We hope you enjoy getting to know the bustling city of Boston. Within walking distance of our host hotel, you can visit Faneuil Hall, stroll through Boston Common, stop by local theatres, and enjoy regional cuisine. Our local hosts have worked hard to think about and put together evening events that offer flexibility, affordability, and something for everybody including (1) fun, informal event options from which to choose AFTER the Get to Know VSA Happy Hour and (2) a museum circulator bus that will run Friday evening to several host museums in the area. We hope you enjoy your visit to Boston. Please thank our hosts when you see them!

## New This Year

We hope you will join a Dining Discussion, attend a Fireside Chat, or take advantage of an extended conversation session with one of our keynote speakers. Consult this program or the registration table for information about these new offerings.

We hope you learn, interact with others, enjoy this conference, and leave inspired. Do feel free to share your suggestions and thoughts with VSA about the 2017 conference that will be in Columbus, Ohio! We hope to see you there!

With warmest regards,  
Your Program Co-Chairs  
Claire Thoma Emmons, Allison Cosbey, and Ellen Bechtol

# What you need to know ...

## Registration and Information Desk

Conference volunteers are available to answer questions at the registration desk, located in the Grand Ballroom Foyer on the 4th floor of the Hyatt Hotel.

## Registration Desk Hours:

### Monday, July 18

4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

### Tuesday, July 19

8:00 – 11:00 a.m.; 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

### Wednesday, July 20

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### Thursday, July 21

7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### Friday, July 22

7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

## Conference Abstracts

The 2016 VSA Conference Abstracts introduce the presentations, panels, and posters at this year's conference. Additionally, they act as a lasting record of the topics discussed here in Boston. Visit [www.visitorstudies.org](http://www.visitorstudies.org) and click on the Conference page to view or download the abstracts in PDF format.

# VSA

Visitor Studies Association

[www.visitorstudies.org](http://www.visitorstudies.org)

## CONFERENCE EVENTS

### 20th Annual April Award Celebration

Wednesday, July 20, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

\$25 minimum

*Sip Bar*

581 Washington St, Boston, MA 02111

### Focused Interest Groups Lunch

Thursday, July 21

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Meet at Registration

### Get to Know VSA Happy Hour

Thursday, July 21, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Free

*P.F. Chang's*

8 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116

### Dining Discussions

Thursday, July 21, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

### Focused Interest Groups

Meet and Greet

Friday, July 22, 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.

Grand Ballroom



### Ambassador Program Lunch

Thursday, July 21, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Meet at Registration Table

### Dinner and Museum Circulator

Friday, July 22, 5:30 – 9:30 p.m.

\$50 (ticket required)

### Museum Circulator

Friday, July 22, begins at 6:00 p.m.

\$10 (ticket required)

### Closing Luncheon

Saturday, July 23, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Free (ticket required)

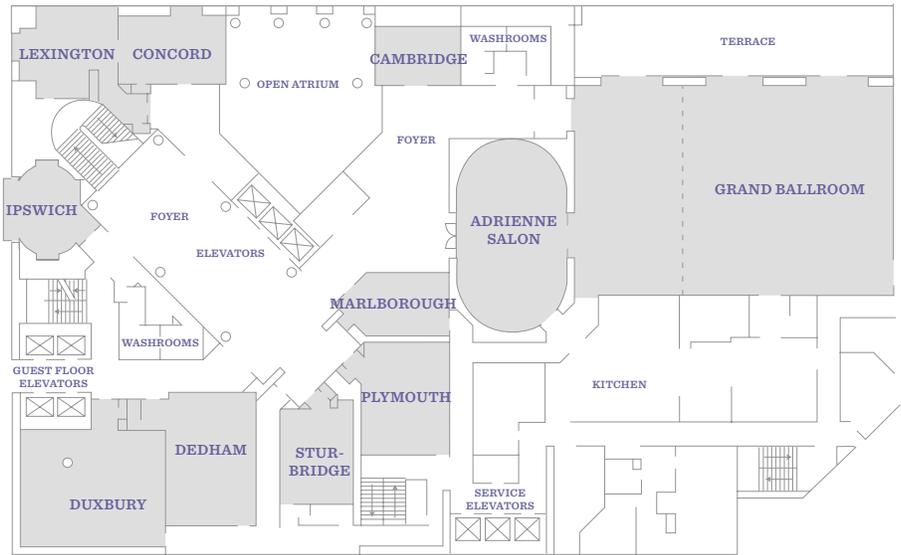
Grand Ballroom



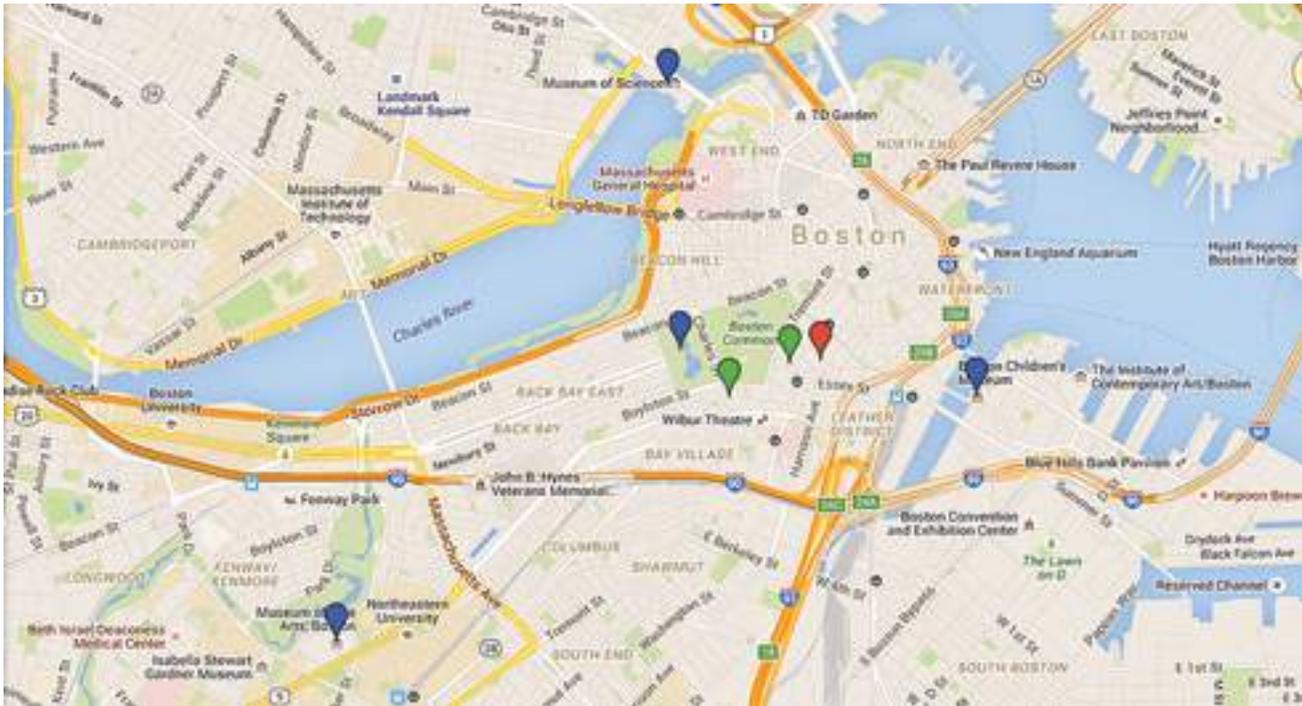
# Floorplan & Map

## Hyatt Regency Floor Plan

4th Floor



## Location Map



 **Hyatt Regency Boston**  
1 Avenue De Lafayette  
Boston, MA 02111

### Museum Circulator

 **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**  
Boston Avenue of the Arts  
465 Huntington Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

 **Boston Public Garden**  
69 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108

 **Museum of Science**  
Science Park  
Boston, MA 02114

 **Boston Children's Museum**  
308 Congress Street  
Boston, MA 02210

### Event Locations

 **Sip Wine Bar and Kitchen**  
581 Washington St.  
Boston, MA 02111

 **P.F. Chang's**  
8 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116

# Pre-Conference Workshops

## Tuesday, July 19 and Wednesday, July 20

Registration is required. Attendees are responsible for transportation to and from the workshop locations.

### Full Day

\$170 VSA Member  
\$200 Non-Member  
\$145 Student Member

### Half Day

\$95 VSA Member  
\$110 Non-Member  
\$85 Student Member

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

**LEVEL 101** We offer a 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 -  
\$170 VSA Member  
\$200 Non-Member  
\$145 Student Member

**HALF DAY** Half Day Workshops -  
\$95 VSA Member  
\$110 Non-Member  
\$85 Student Member

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](http://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

## Tuesday, July 19

SPONSORED BY:



**Full Day Workshops**  
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### Analyzing Data from Visual Artwork: Learning a New Method

*Donna DiBartolomeo, Director of Exhibits, Sciencenter; Zachary Clark, Director of Early Learning, Sitar Arts Center*



[Lexington](#)

### Recruiting, Training, & Maintaining Research and Evaluation Volunteers

*Fran Mast, Shedd Aquarium*



[Concord](#)

### Social Network Analysis for Visitor Studies: A Hands-On Introduction

*Deborah Wasserman, Lifelong Learning Group; Maryann Durland, Durland Consulting*



[Sturbridge](#)

### Half Day Workshop

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Frequently Utilized Statistical Techniques: Conceptual Frameworks and Strategies for Application

*Amy Cota-McKinley, Professor, Worcester State University*



[Plymouth](#)

### Half Day Workshops

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### Advanced Statistical Techniques: Conceptual Frameworks and Strategies for Application

*Amy Cota-McKinley, Professor, Worcester State University*



[Plymouth](#)

### Wine and Work Workshop

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

### Planning for Project Success in a Complex Adaptive System: Approached, Applications, and Resources from the CASNET Project

*Elizabeth Kunz Kollmann, Museum of Science, Boston; Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota; Chris Cardiel, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry*



[Plymouth](#)

## Wednesday, July 20

SPONSORED BY: [Rockman et al](#)  
Research & Evaluation

### Full Day Workshops

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### The Life Cycle of an Evaluation Project: Effective Strategies for Evaluation Design, Project Management, and Communicating Findings

*Elizabeth Bolander and Hannah Ridenour, The Cleveland Museum of Art*



[Sturbridge](#)

### Flexible Methods for Exhibit Formative Evaluation

*Elizabeth Kunz Kollmann and Leigh Ann Mesiti, Museum of Science, Boston; Juli Goss, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*



[Museum of Science, ERC](#)

### The Data Visualization and Reporting Game

*Kate Livingston, ExposeYourMuseum; Claire Thoma Emmons, Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Lauren Wilson, Illuminated Ideas*



[Plymouth](#)

### Half Day Workshop

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Beyond Multiple Choice: A Short Introduction to Qualitative Methods

*Jim Kisiel, California State University*



[Concord](#)

### Half Day Workshop

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

### Survey Item Development 101

*Sara Clarke-Vivier, University of New Hampshire; Christina Smiraglia, Harvard University*



[Concord](#)

### Wine and Work Workshop

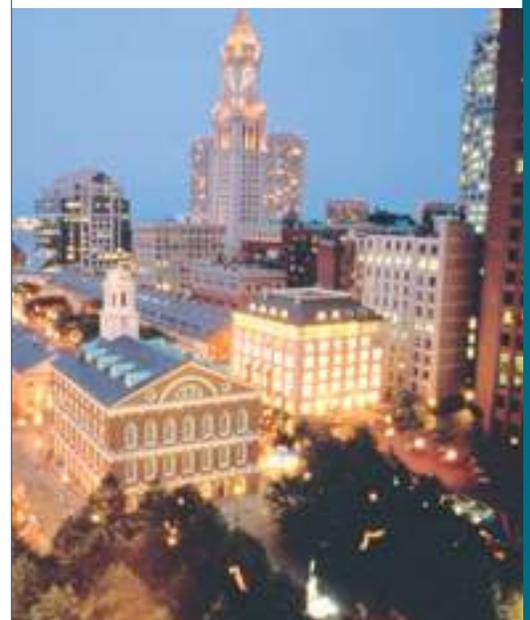
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

### Elevating Your Evaluation: Diversi- fying Communication Strategies for Museum Education Audiences

*Cynthia Robinson, Tufts University; Joy Kubarek, PEER Associates; Amy Grack Nelson, Science Museum of Minnesota*



[Lexington](#)



# Wednesday, July 20 Pre-Conference Schedule

## Data Viz Focused Interest Group's VSA Slide Clinic

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

*Kate Livingston, ExposeYourMuseum; Claire Thoma, Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Claire Quimby, Rockman et al; Lauren Wilson, Illuminated Ideas; Alex Lussenhop and Ryan Auster, Museum of Science, Boston; Troy Livingston, The Thinkery*

### Dedham

Presenters! Your session was accepted. You've picked out your presentation day outfit and your cat/partner/coworker has heard you rehearse at least 10 times. What else can you do to ensure you captivate your audience? Make sure your slides are clean, clear, and gorgeous! The VSA Data Visualization & Reporting (DVR) FIG will be onsite and ready to help. Bring your slide deck and spend 15-20 mins with our slide coaches. They'll suggest just a few, easy-to-do, last minute fixes to make sure your presentation looks its best. No preregistration required for this drop-in session. Just bring your laptop with the slide deck loaded.

## 19th Annual April Award Celebration 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

\$25 minimum

### Sip Bar

Kick off the 2016 VSA conference in Boston with a celebratory cocktail hour at the Hyatt Hotel. Each year, the April Award welcomes and honors one outstanding new professional to the field. Come toast this year's award recipient, meet up with friends and colleagues old and new, and support a longstanding VSA tradition. We have 3 different price points to support the ongoing fundraising endeavors of this event. This year, the Awards event will occur near the Hyatt Hotel, making it easy for you to stop in for as much or as little time as you want!

*Sip is located at 581 Washington St, an 8-minute walk from the Hyatt Hotel.*

*Entry ticket is required. There will be ability to purchase admittance at the door, for a minimum of \$25.*

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## Special Session With Institute for Museum and Library Services

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

### Plymouth

Engage in discussion with an IMLS Program Officer regarding the IMLS proposal review process as it relates to each proposal's evaluation. In particular, we will hear about the challenges IMLS has faced in getting critical reviews of project evaluations and brainstorm ideas of how VSA and VSA members might help IMLS improve the evaluation literacy of project proposers and project directors.



## SILENT AUCTION

Thursday, July 21 – Friday July 22

### Grand Ballroom

Come see the useful, funny, and tasty things we've rounded up from our generous members and donors. The auction will open during Thursday morning's keynote address and continue until 4 pm Friday, after which we will announce our lucky winners. This is a great way to do your souvenir shopping and support VSA at the same time, so don't miss it!

## 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:

### 20th Annual April Award:

**Staci Bennett**, Des Moines Art Center

Meet Staci at the April Award Celebration on Wednesday, July 20. The April Award commends an outstanding emerging professional in the field. It was established by Dr. Marilyn (Molly) Hood to honor the memory of her longtime research assistant April Lahm.

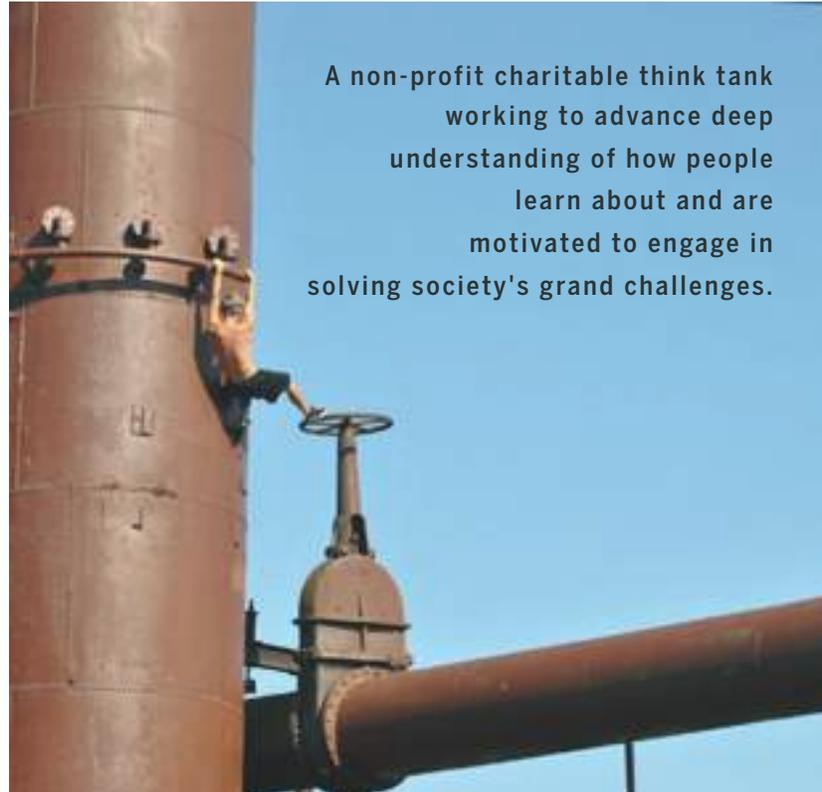
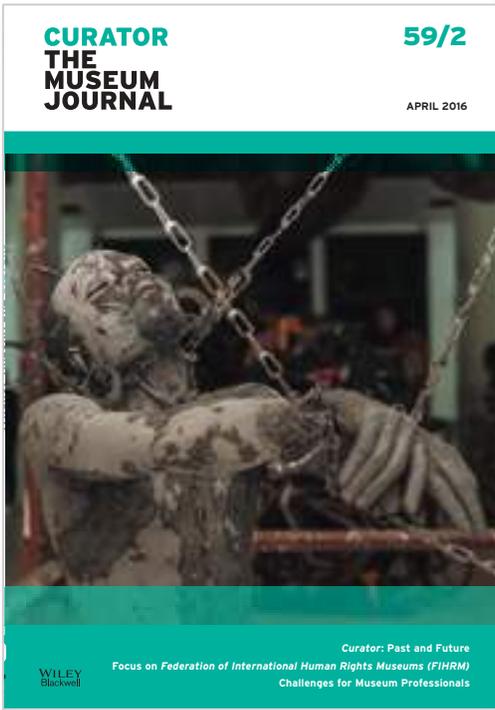
### 2016 Student Scholarships:

**Pippa Gardner**, University of Sheffield

**Kristen Denton**, California State University, Long Beach

**Margaret Schriber**, Seton Hall University

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



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# VSA is an association of VIPs

It is an honor and a pleasure to serve in leadership roles with this important organization, and we invite you to consider ways in which you can become more involved.

Kimberlee Kiehl, President

Rae Ostman, President-Elect

Joe E. Heimlich, Past President



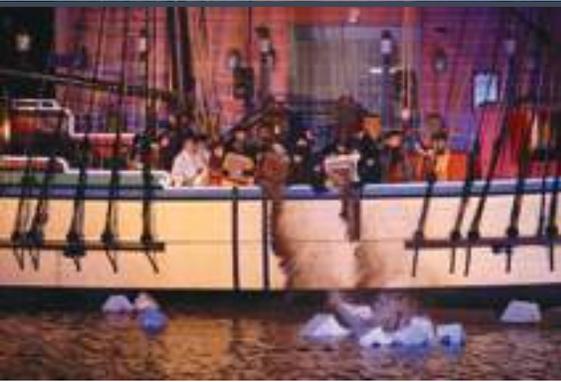
**Inspire curiosity**  
**Foster experimentation**  
**Stimulate informed action**

The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in beautiful Portland, Oregon serves over 1 million visitors each year.

As we continue to grow, we currently seek a Research and Evaluation Impacts Manager to join our team.

Learn more at:  
[omsi.applicantpool.com](https://omsi.applicantpool.com)

**OMSI**



## Session Streams

This year, we provide a variety of streams of discussion for attendees to navigate. Each session's stream is depicted with its title:

**Evaluation 101** Introductory concepts, how-to, information relevant for those new to the field.

**Methodology** Strategies and concepts related to data collection, analysis, and reporting.

**Reporting Findings** Presenting the findings from a discrete research or evaluation project.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion** Focused on the ways visitor studies help us better understand and implement inclusive practices that can foster diversity at our institutions and in our field.

**Big Questions and Field-wide Issues** Wrestles with a big question in the field and/or poses a problem or question for a group to discuss/solve. This could be work continued from a previous convening.

**Organizational Change and Capacity Building** Findings, reflections and best practices related to leading institutional change through research and evaluation and building evaluation capacity for ourselves and our stakeholders.

**Networks and Complex Systems** Exploring the opportunities and challenges presented by projects that bring together multiple institutions or communities to create informal learning networks.

## Session Formats

This year's conference features a variety of presentation formats. Each session's format is depicted with the following icons:

 **Individual Project/Paper Presentations** These sessions include three presentations on separate, but related, topics. Each speaker gives a 15 minute presentation about his/her project. Presenters reserve time for audience discussion about the topic.

 **Panel Presentations** The 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.

 **Roundtable Discussion** An individual presenter facilitates an informal small group discussion around a key topic or area of interest in the field. Multiple presenters will lead these discussions in the same room during a 75-minute session. Attendees will be allowed, but not required, to rotate between conversations.

 **Working Group** An individual or group of presenters facilitates action-focused discussion to generate ideas or plans to move towards white papers, publications, and/or policies. These sessions are highly collaborative and intended to result in new directions or products.

 **Hands-on Workshop** Demonstrations or applied practice where participants experience or take part in active learning.

 **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.

 **Fireside Chat** A more informal gathering of colleagues, facilitated by a session chair. The chair may present a brief introduction or jump right into a discussion and Question and Answer session.

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.**  
**Coffee Break**  
[Grand Ballroom Foyer](#)

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**CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUMS**

**8:45 – 9:15 a.m.**  
**Welcome from VSA and  
President's Address**  
[Grand Ballroom](#)

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

**9:15 – 10:15 a.m.**

**Opening Keynote**  
*Chris Lysy*  
[Grand Ballroom](#)



Chris Lysy is a data visualization expert with Westat, one of the foremost research, statistical survey, and communications organizations in the United States.

The world has changed rapidly. Over the last decade we have been bombarded with information. Given that, is it really all that surprising that nobody wants to read a long boring text and table heavy pdf report?

Chris attempts to show through his work at Westat, his blog ([freshspectrum.com](http://freshspectrum.com)), and his digital workshop ([diydatadesign.com](http://diydatadesign.com)) that in order to increase the value of research and evaluation we have to change the way we report. Cartoons, blog posts, interactive data visualizations, animations, stories, videos, email, infographics and social media posts are all potential vehicles.

But every successful design starts with one thing, the needs of our audience. And if we can truly understand that audience, we can increase the value of our work. Whether that's an audience of one, your boss, or an entire city.

# Thursday, July 16 Conference Schedule

**10:30 – 11:45 a.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – I**

 **Follow-Up Discussion with  
Chris Lysy**

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide  
Issues**

[Concord](#)

Continue the conversation in a more intimate format with the Keynote Speaker.

 **Testing New Ways to Engage:  
Prototyping in Art Museums**

*Maia Werner-Avidon, Asian Art Museum; Lynn Courtney and Adam Tessier, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Tiffany Leason, Indianapolis Museum of Art; Hannah Ridenour, The Cleveland Museum of Art*

**Stream: Methodology**

[Dedham](#)

In an effort to reach new and diverse audiences, many art museums are using prototypes to test ways to engage visitors. Five art museums will share their prototyping experiences, highlighting key considerations, sharing approaches and methods, and exploring the impact on decision making. Concrete examples of prototypes and associated evaluation instruments will be provided.

### Session Key

 **Individual Project/Paper  
Presentations**

 **Panel Presentations**

 **Roundtable Discussion**

 **Working Group**

 **Hands-on Workshop**

 **Poster Presentations**

 **Fireside Chat**



 **Innovative Continuity:  
Extending and Adapting  
Evaluation as a Project Changes**

*Katie Todd, Museum of Science, Boston; Smirla Ramos-Montañez, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry*

**Stream: Networks and Complex Systems  
AND Methodology**

[Plymouth](#)

During periods of project transition, evaluators can often reassess their approach. A multi-institutional evaluation team will share benefits and challenges of continuing prior practices, improving existing methods, and testing new innovations. Presentations and small-group discussions will follow a worksheet that participants can use to weigh evaluation options during project change.

 **Exploring Shared Questions  
about Visitor Experiences**

*Sarah Cohn, Cohn Consulting; Elisa Israel, Saint Louis Science Center; Alex Lussenhop, Museum of Science, Boston*

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide  
Issues AND Methodology**

[Duxbury](#)

The COVES project team wants to connect with YOU to shape the future of what comparable visitor data we should collect across institutions. After presenting about the first year of development and preliminary findings, small groups will discuss what else would be useful to include in the future COVES instrument.

 **Researching Methods: Pilot  
Study Findings to Inform Your  
Data Collection**

*Ryan Auster, Museum of Science, Boston; Mike Rathbun, Discovery Center; Cara Lonardo-Roy, The Discovery Museums; Tania Tiburcio, New York Hall of Science*

**Stream: Methodology**

[Sturbridge](#)

Think you know the best way to collect audience-level data? Results from a multi-institutional pilot effort that focused on different data collection methods and sampling strategies will inform a conversation between panelists and the audience on how – and why – we study our visitors.

 **Paper Presentations**

[Adrienne](#)

 **How Data Changed NISE Net's  
Programming Efforts**

*Marta Beyer, Museum of Science, Boston*

**Stream: Networks and Complex Systems**

Data collected mid-way through the NISE Network revealed that museum professionals were not making full use of resources raising societal and ethical implications of nanotechnology. Come hear how these findings led to changes in the types of materials and PD opportunities offered and the types of gains professionals ultimately reported.

 **Social Network Analysis  
for Sustaining a Community  
of Practice**

*Deborah Wasserman, Lifelong Learning Group; Cathlyn Stylinski, Appalachian Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science; Sasha Palmquist, Palmquist & Associates*

**Stream: Methodology AND Networks and  
Complex Systems**

This paper presents a case study about how social network analysis was used to dialogically engage stakeholders

in strategic planning—in this case, informal climate change educators in the sustainability planning for their MADE CLEAR Community of Practice.

 **Measuring Social Value: An SROI Exhibition Evaluation**

*Jo Brehaut, Auckland Museum*

**Stream: Reporting Findings AND Methodology**

In response to a global interest in better understanding the impact and value created by cultural institutions, the Auckland Museum in New Zealand undertook a Social Return on Investment evaluation (SROI) of one of its temporary exhibitions. The Museum's Visitor and Market Research Manager will take you on their SROI journey; through the unique methodology, highlighting key findings and also discussing the place of SROI in future practice.

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

**11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.**  
**Focused Interest Group Lunch**

*Meet at the Registration Table to walk to lunch*

Time for FIG members to formally gather at the annual conference. If you are an active member, or you are considering joining a FIG, hop into the conversation!

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.**  
**Development Committee Meeting**  
[Duxbury](#)

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.**  
**Professional Development Committee Meeting**  
[Adrienne](#)

**2:00 – 3:15 p.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – II**

 **Science Engagement in Young Adulthood: A Golden Opportunity for Museums?**

*Josh Gutwill, Exploratorium; Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota*

**Stream: Reporting Findings**  
[Dedham](#)

Informal learning environments are creating more experiences to attract and engage young adult learners. What are the characteristics of this audience? What short- and long-term impacts do learning environments like science museums have on them? We will share methods and results from several studies of this age group.

 **Perspectives on Professional Growth, Impacts, and Organizational Change**

*Juli Goss, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; Joe E. Heimlich, Lifelong Learning Group; Marta Beyer and Leigh Ann Mesiti, Museum of Science, Boston*

**Stream: Organizational Change and Capacity Building AND Reporting Findings**  
[Plymouth](#)

Museum professionals drive institutions forward, but what do we know about how to impact their work? Come hear how recent research and evaluation from NISE Net and a national, collaborative research project on professional development can shed light on this topic and suggest new steps to consider.

 **Let Your Data Talk: Engaging Stakeholders in Data Discussions**

*Anna Lopez, Woodland Park Zoo; Kimberly Pratt, COSI; Renae Youngs, Minnesota State Arts Board*

**Stream: Organizational Change and Capacity Building**  
[Duxbury](#)

What happens when you help your data really do the talking? And what

happens when stakeholders get to talk back? This panel describes three approaches for engaging stakeholders more deeply in data conversations. Bring your own data or findings to share, and practice one or more approaches in the session!

 **Roundtable Discussions**  
[Adrienne](#)

 **Who's Not Here?: Questions About Better Understanding Potential Visitors**

*Andréa Giron Mathern, Denver Museum of Nature and Science; Patience Baach, The Field Museum; Nicole Baltazar, Slover Linett Audience Research*

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide Issues AND Diversity, Equity, Inclusion**

As important as knowing who is currently visiting informal learning environments is understanding who is not. How do we do this, and what changes do we make after gathering data? Four evaluators who've asked questions about methods, equity, and next steps will facilitate a conversation on understanding potential visitors.

 **Using Evaluation to Strengthen Community and Learning Organization Partnerships**

*Claire Lannoye-Hall and Diane Miller, Detroit Zoological Society*

**Stream: Networks and Complex Systems**

Authentically evaluating partnerships between organizations is essential to creating long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. This roundtable will engage the audience in discussion about partnering with other organizations, creating actions plans based on evaluation results, and comparing the audience's experiences with effectively evaluating partnerships.

# Thursday, July 16 Conference Schedule

**2:00 – 3:15 p.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – II**

 **Developing a Common Language for Equity and Inclusion in Evaluation**

Patricia Montano, Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education

**Stream: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion AND Big Questions and Field-wide Issues**

Offered by the Bridging Communities FIG, this discussion will bring together research and evaluation colleagues to build a common understanding of terminology used related to equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive evaluation. The FIG will document the terms discussed and examples of projects given to illustrate the terms and related practices.

**3:15 – 3:45 p.m.** **SPONSORED BY:**  
**Coffee Break**   
**Grand Ballroom Foyer**

**3:45 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – III**

 **Fireside Chat with Mary Ellen Munley**

Mary Ellen Munley, MEM Associates

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide Issues**

**Terry's Corner**

Audience research and evaluation have changed in their use, utility, and requirements over time. Reflecting on the shifting landscape of museums, information gathering and accountability over the past few decades, Mary Ellen Munley will speak briefly about how her work has changed over the years. She will then open up a discussion among attendees about the state of the field from practitioner and evaluator/researcher perspectives.

*Terry's Corner is located off of the Avenue One bar in the Hyatt Hotel lobby.*

 **Time to Stop Talking to Ourselves: Capacity Building with Non-Evaluators**

Taline A. Kuyumjian, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Marianna Adams, Audience Focus Inc.; Cindy Foley, Columbus Museum of Art; Michelle Grohe, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

**Stream: Organizational Change and Capacity Building**  
**Dedham**

Explore how adopting a culture of evaluative thinking can have wide-ranging effects on practitioners and institutions, including build stronger bonds with visitors and making data-driven decisions in service to them. Investigate ways to adapt traditional methodologies and create innovative, embedded methodologies that makes handling data accessible for busy practitioners.

 **Making Children's Learning through Play Visible: Developing an Observation Tool for Caregivers**

Camellia Sanford and Claire Quimby, Rockman et al.; Robin Meisner and Susan Letourneau, Providence Children's Museum

**Stream: Reporting Findings**  
**Plymouth**

What does learning through play look like? Join us as we discuss the process of identifying visible learning behaviors included in a caregiver observation activity within a children's museum. Session participants will get a chance to test out the observation activity themselves, and discuss its potential applications for evaluating learning.

 **Tackling Common Measures: Designing Evaluation Tools for Cross-Project Use**

Karen Knutson, University of Pittsburgh Center for Learning in Out of School Environments; Mac Cannady, Lawrence Hall of Science; Karen Peterman, Peterman Consulting; Amy Grack Nelson, Science Museum of Minnesota

**Stream: Methodology**  
**Concord**

The informal learning research field has become increasingly interested in understanding how to compare experience and impact across settings. Papers discuss four different common measures studies; looking at family learning in natural history museums, public participation in science festivals, and youth experiences and the development of teamwork skills in science programs in informal settings. Presenters will discuss findings and methodological challenges of common measures studies.

 **Evaluators Leading and Shaping Institutional Change**

Rebekah Sobel, US Holocaust Memorial Museum; Rita Deedrick, Center of Science and Industry; Nick Visscher, Denver Zoo; Lei Zhao, Shedd Aquarium

**Stream: Organizational Change and Capacity Building**  
**Duxbury**

Coupling widespread growth of internal evaluation roles in museums, zoos, and aquaria nationwide with the changing nonprofit leadership environment, institutional planning and socializing change among the wider staff seems to be an emerging role for internal evaluators. Our panel consists of internal evaluators who are acting as catalysts, using our own data projects in many cases to drive change and prepare our institutions for the future. The panelists represent a variety of institutions that are involved in socializing change and operationalizing institutional plans.

 **Paper Presentations**  
[Adrienne](#)

 **Beyond Self-Reports: Direct Measures of Informal Learning Experiences**

*Alice Fu and Archana Kannan, SK Partners*

**Stream: Methodology AND Evaluation 101**

This session will provide an overview of direct measures--what they are, how they compare to self-reports, and examples of their use in studies of informal learning. Participants will have the opportunity to share their own experiences with direct measures and consider how to integrate them into their own work.

 **Using Sequence Analysis to Understand Visitor Behavior**

*Joyce Ma, Exploratorium*

**Stream: Methodology**

This presentation will describe sequence analysis techniques that can help researchers and evaluators make sense of chronological patterns in visitor behavior. Through three examples, the talk will illustrate how these techniques can shed new light on familiar questions using data the field already collects (e.g. timing and tracking, computer logs).

 **Talking About Thinking: Eliciting and Comparing Novice and Expert Strategies**

*Leigh Ann Mesiti, Museum of Science, Boston*

**Stream: Methodology**

Interested to learn more about how novices and experts use exhibits? Come hear how retrospective think-alouds were used to reveal variety in visitors' learning strategies at computer programming-based exhibits, as well as how our study findings informed design to support all audiences to think about programming in more sophisticated ways.

**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Get to Know VSA Happy Hour**  
[P.F. Chang's](#)

VSA's Membership Committee invites you to attend a Happy Hour! Hangout with other attendees and VSA members to get to know them and the organization better while enjoying tasty food and drink. Drop off your business card at the beginning for your chance to win a puzzling door prize.

VSA leaders will be on hand to chat about VSA and the variety of ways members can volunteer! Perfect for new attendees as well as long-time members!

*P.F. Chang's is located at 8 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, an 8-minute walk from the hotel.*

*Pre-registration is not required for this event. Hors d'oeuvres provided and drinks available for purchase.*

**7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**  
**Dining Discussions**

VSA has coordinated participant-led conversations over dinner; the purpose of these conversations is to provide informal networking and socializing opportunities for attendees who share a common interest. If you haven't already, find the list of topics and sign up to participate at the registration table. Diner will gather at a designated location and time, walk to the restaurant together, dine, discuss, and pay for their own dinner.

**7:00 – 10:00 p.m.**  
**Informal Evening Events**

In lieu of multiple evening events that don't provide you with much food, VSA has pulled together a few options for continued merriment and frivolity with other conference attendees. Please see the program insert for a few suggestions that are close to the Hyatt Hotel. Talk to colleagues, old and new friends, and create a memorable night here in Boston!



# Friday, July 17 Conference Schedule



**7:30 – 8:30 a.m.** **COFFEE BREAK** **SPONSORED BY:**  
**Coffee Break** **garibaygroup**  
[Grand Ballroom Foyer](#)

**7:30 – 8:00 a.m.**  
**Focused Interest Group Meet and Greet**  
[Grand Ballroom](#)

Grab some morning treats and learn more about VSA's Focused Interest Groups.

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.**  
**VSA Business Meeting**  
[Grand Ballroom](#)

Join fellow members and colleagues for the latest VSA news to find out what is in store for the organization in the coming year. VSA President, Kim Kiehl, will discuss recent activities within VSA, we will review the Association's finances, and more. Please come for some morning snacks and to hear about our awesome activities!

## Session Key

-  **Individual Project/Paper Presentations**
-  **Panel Presentations**
-  **Roundtable Discussion**
-  **Working Group**
-  **Hands-on Workshop**
-  **Poster Presentations**
-  **Fireside Chat**

**9:00 – 10:15 a.m.**



**Keynote Speaker**  
*Catherine D'Ignazio*  
[Grand Ballroom](#)

Catherine D'Ignazio is an Assistant Professor of Civic Media and Data Visualization at Emerson College and a Research Affiliate at the Emerson Engagement Lab and the MIT Media Lab. She is a researcher, designer, and software developer whose work focuses on making data and data-driven storytelling more accessible, inclusive, and empowering. D'Ignazio has co-developed a suite of tools for data literacy (DataBasic.io) and is currently working with the Public Laboratory for Technology and Science to explore the possibilities for journalistic storytelling with DIY environmental sensors.

Data-centric thinking is rapidly becoming vital to the way we work, communicate, and understand in the 21st century, but our collective data literacy has not yet caught up to the data hype. D'Ignazio will present ways that artists, journalists, and scientists are making data-driven storytelling playful, participatory, and open for the purposes of making data more accessible and more empowering.



**10:30 – 11:45 a.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – IV**

 **Follow-Up Discussion with Catherine D'Ignazio**

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide Issues**  
[Concord](#)

Continue the conversation in a more intimate format with the Keynote Speaker.

 **Thinking about Thinking: Fostering and Studying Metacognition in Science Museums**

*Josh Gutwill and Toni Danstep, Exploratorium; Elizabeth Fleming, North Carolina Museum of Life and Science; Wendy Meluch, Visitor Studies Services*

**Stream: Methodology**  
[Plymouth](#)

The Science of Sharing project developed exhibits and month-long social media experiences (Experimonths) to engage the public in social dilemmas about competition, cooperation and resource sharing. Metacognition—thinking about thinking—was crucial and assessed in multiple ways across the project. We present our methods and results from various studies.

 **How to Keep from Drowning in Data**

*Jennifer Borland and Claire Quimby, Rockman et al.; Elee Wood, IUPUI*

**Stream: Evaluation 101**  
[Duxbury](#)

Our team of data-collection “lifeguards” will show you how to keep from drowning in data by offering tips and tricks for collecting and analyzing data in the most efficient and effective ways possible.



## **How Audiences Find Relevance: Research Methods and Findings in Two Innovative Exhibitions**

*Alice Anderson, Science Museum of Minnesota; Allison Cosby, Conner Prairie Interactive History Park; Liz Kunz Kollmann, Museum of Science, Boston; Jessica Luke, University of Washington*

**Stream: Methodology**  
[Dedham](#)

Comparing research/evaluation of two museum exhibitions, each examining how family groups discuss content in relation to their lives. Take-aways include best practices for reflective interviewing, analyzing extensive data sets, developing coding schemes, intentionality in exhibit design, as well as discussion of findings, and lessons learned via emergent challenges.

## **Multilingualism in Museums: A Case for Broadening Our Thinking**

*Cecilia Garibay, Garibay Group; Laura Huerta Migus, Association of Children's Museums; Juli Goss, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*

**Stream: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion AND Big Questions and Field-wide Issues**  
[Sturbridge](#)

Using key ideas from the "Redefining Multilingualism in Museums" issue of the *Museums and Social Issues* journal as a springboard for discussion, we examine critical issues regarding language and access for multilingual audiences, including the role researchers, evaluators and practitioners play in more adequately addressing issues of language in museums.

## **Roundtable Discussions**

[Adrienne](#)

## **Measuring Program Impact Across a Community**

*Kathy Kiser, Lincoln Park Zoo*

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide Issues**

Evaluation often focuses on individual change, but how might we measure a program's impact on the community as a whole? Lincoln Park Zoo is attempting to answer this challenging question. Join us to explore relevant literature and review the zoo's draft evaluation plan.

## **Museum Data Systems: How to Use What We've Got**

*Erin Gong, Consultant; Jocelyn Mulvaney, COSI; Jennifer Rigney, Monterey Bay Aquarium; Keri Ryan, Art Gallery of Ontario*

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide Issues AND Methodology**

Join a dynamic discussion with evaluators leveraging data systems (admissions, point-of-sales, CRM) for visitor research. What can we learn from large data vs traditional visitor studies? What's the line between visitor research and market research? How do we wrangle this data, with what tools? Organizationally, who owns these data projects?

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

**11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.**  
**Ambassador Lunch**

*Please meet at the Registration Table to walk to lunch.*

New to VSA? New to the conference? Join us for lunch! VSA Ambassadors are getting together for lunch on Friday to meet one another and talk about the conference and the Association. Meet us around 11:45 at the Registration Table and we'll head off to lunch. If you cannot make the lunch, please find one of us. We are here to help you make the most out of your VSA Conference experience!

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

[Lexington](#)

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.**  
**Conference Planning Committee Meeting**

[Duxbury](#)

**1:45 – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – V**

## **Effectively Working With and Supervising Research and Evaluation Support Staff**

*Christopher Cardiel, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Ellen Roth, Denver Museum of Nature and Science; Nick Visscher, Denver Zoo*

**Stream: Organizational Change and Capacity Building AND Evaluation 101**  
[Concord](#)

Are you a supervisor of research and evaluation support staff, thinking about establishing a support staff system at your organization, or just interested in learning how to work productively and effectively with support staff? Join our diverse group of panelists for a discussion of successes, challenges, and lessons learned!

# Friday, July 17 Conference Schedule

**1:45 – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – V**

 **Generating Causal Evidence in Visitor Studies: The Potential of Quasi-Experimental Designs**

*Scott Pattison, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Ryan Auster, Museum of Science, Boston; Mac Cannady, Research Group at the Lawrence Hall of Science*

**Stream: Methodology**  
[Plymouth](#)

Quasi-experimental designs offer researchers one method for determining causality in informal or free-choice learning environments. Come hear about two such studies and discuss strategies for applying the approach to your own research and addressing inherent threats to internal validity.

 **Demystifying “p<.05:” How to Find Significance in Your Data**

*Jennifer Rigney, Monterey Bay Aquarium; Lei Zhao, Shedd Aquarium*

**Stream: Methodology AND Evaluation 101**  
[Duxbury](#)

“My data are statistically significant.” End of story, right? Attend this session and you’ll better understand how statistical significance should (and should not) be interpreted in your research, and learn how power analyses, confidence intervals, and effect sizes are more meaningful than  $p < .05$  in understanding your data.

**Session Key**

-  **Individual Project/Paper Presentations**
-  **Panel Presentations**
-  **Roundtable Discussion**
-  **Working Group**
-  **Hands-on Workshop**
-  **Poster Presentations**
-  **Fireside Chat**

 **Impacting Institutional Decision-Making: Reflections on Developing an Evaluation Department**

*Elizabeth Kunz Kollmann, Wayne Bouchard, Paul Fontaine and Heather Calvin, Museum of Science, Boston*

**Stream: Organizational Change and Field-wide Issues**  
[Dedham](#)

This presentation will share the perspective of three senior evaluation consumers and one evaluator at the Museum of Science, Boston on how evaluation has been integrated into decision-making across the institution. These leaders will reflect on how increased internal capacity has influenced decision-making and planning within the institution.

 **Roundtable Discussions**  
[Adrienne](#)

 **What Does That Mean? Exploring the Language of Outcomes**

*Cathy Sigmond, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.; Sarah May, Boston Children’s Museum; Elizabeth Bolander, Cleveland Museum of Art*

**Stream: Evaluation 101**

What do we really mean when we use words like “connections,” “comfort,” and “engagement” in intended project outcomes? Join us for an active discussion about the challenges evaluators and practitioners face when outcomes include ambiguous language. Learn ways to find common ground when defining outcomes to ensure successful evaluation projects.

 **Survey Defense is Common Sense: Securing Our Online Data Tools**

*Dolly Hayde, Lifelong Learning Group*

**Stream: Evaluation 101**

Although online tools can collect data efficiently, they also pose unique considerations for data quality. This session will offer practical strategies for protecting surveys and respondents, as well as general tips for working online securely. All skill levels welcome, and no technology is required; hard copy resources will accommodate all platforms.

 **Measuring Emotionally-Driven Programming in Museums**

*Rachael Mathews, the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis*

**Stream: Methodology**

As evaluators in learning institutions, we often find ourselves struggling to figure out how to effectively measure affective aspects of programming and exhibits. Join this roundtable discussion for a look into how evaluators can develop useful tools and strategies for evaluating emotional visitor experiences in facilitated programming and museum theatre performances.

**3:15 – 4:45 p.m.** **SPONSORED BY:**  
**Coffee Break**  
[Grand Ballroom Foyer](#)



3:15 – 4:45 p.m.

SPONSORED BY:



## (#1) *The Enduring Value of Prototyping: Evaluating a Central Park Zoo Exhibit*

*Sarah Edmunds, Wildlife Conservation Society*

A prototype evaluation of the Central Park Zoo's upcoming grizzly bear exhibit gave our team valuable insights about how to improve the exhibit's messaging and functionality. Our study supports the continued relevance of prototyping, observational data, and qualitative data in designing effective interactive experiences.

## (#2) *Seven Deadly Impediments to Engaging Visitor Attention*

*Stephen Bitgood, Jacksonville State University*

The poster describes seven major factors that impede visitors engaging in a meaningful way with exhibitions. A bibliography of visitor studies supporting these factors will be provided on a handout to Conference participants. An otherwise well-designed exhibition will suffer from lack of visitor engagement if these factors are not controlled.

## (#3) *Addressing Climate Change through Visits to the Zoo*

*Jill Bueddefeld, University of Manitoba*

This poster discusses Ms. Bueddefeld's MA thesis research, which explored the role of post-visit action resources as a means to facilitate greater learning and sustainable behavior change after an on-site visit. By working with the Assiniboine Park Zoo post-visit resources were developed and assessed through a mixed-methods field experiment.

## (#4) *Research and Evaluation Resources on InformalScience.org*

*Grace Troxel and Patricia Montano, Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE)*

The Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE) recently re-launched InformalScience.org. New features include responsive design for mobile devices, advanced searching options, and extensive introductions to evaluation and research in the context of informal STEM education.

## (#5) *The Learning Impact from the Placement of Interpretive Elements*

*Eduardo Trujillo and Manda Smith, Lincoln Park Zoo*

The purpose of the project is to investigate how guests are engaging with interpretive elements at the Lincoln Park Zoo and if guests understand and learn about conservation through this medium. The placement and location of these elements will be investigated in order to better utilize them in promoting conservation.

## (#6) *Evaluating Visitor Expectations of Content at the Burke Museum*

*Paul Martinez, Jema Hayes, and Gracie Loesser, University of Washington*

The Burke Museum and the University of Washington Museology Evaluation Group conducted a year-long study that analyzed visitor expectations of the local versus international geographical representation covered in the Burke's exhibit content to inform future interpretation. The study also assessed visitor awareness of the geographical reach of the Burke's collections.



## (#7) *Studying Group Interactions with Visitracker: A Design-Based Research-Practice Partnership*

*Palmyre Pierroux, University of Oslo; Anne Qvale, National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design*

Visitracker introduces a unique research focus, supporting the collection of observational data on group interactions and movements. We present findings from initial studies using this new visitor studies tool, and we reflect on the insights such data may offer when triangulated with results from tracking and timing methods.

## (#8) *Building Evaluation Capacity among Individuals and Institutions within Complex Systems*

*Elizabeth Kunz Kollmann, Museum of Science, Boston; Marjorie Bequette, Amy Grack Nelson, and Lauren Causey: Science Museum of Minnesota; Chris Cardiel, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Sarah Cohn, Cohn Consulting*

What role can evaluation capacity building (ECB) play in meeting evaluation needs for complex systems? How can ECB efforts be designed to foster evaluation use and learning? Learn what research about Team-Based Inquiry in the NISE Net reveals about how to implement ECB in different levels of a complex system.

# Friday, July 17 Conference Schedule

3:15 – 4:45 p.m.

SPONSORED BY:



**Poster Session**  
Grand Ballroom



## **(#9) Create.Connect: Exploring the Visitor Experience at a Hands-on History and STEM Exhibition**

Allison Cosby, Conner Prairie Interactive History Park; Alice Anderson and Marjorie Bequette, Science Museum of Minnesota

This poster presents findings from an NSF-funded, multi-year evaluation of Create.Connect, an exhibition at Conner Prairie that weaves together history and STEM through hands-on activities, objects and historical settings. Evaluators used multiple methods, including recording family conversations, to understand how visitors engaged with both history and STEM in the exhibition.



## **(#10) Making Sound Choices: Evaluating Conservation in a Compact Space**

Peter Kleinpass, Maria Robinson, and Catherine Scharon, University of Washington

This summative evaluation by the Seattle Aquarium and the University of Washington Museology Graduate Program assessed visitor use of Sound Choices, an exhibit on the complexity of conservation decision-making. Additionally, we measured visitors' understanding of exhibit themes and degree of participation in conservation behaviors to inform future messaging.



## **(#11) Young Engineers at Play: Refining Frameworks and Programs with Data**

Lisa Trahan, Lawrence Hall of Science

At the Lawrence Hall of Science, program staff and evaluators collaborated to develop an effective practices framework, discussed evaluation findings, and developed a theory about engineering design experiences for young children. This poster shares current thinking and questions about how young children engineer through play in drop-in museum programming.



## **(#12) Evaluating Nationwide Implementation of the National Living Laboratory Model**

Sarah Pfeifle and Katie Todd, Museum of Science, Boston

This poster shares strategies for approaching the complexities arising from the summative evaluation of Living Laboratory's nationwide dissemination. It focuses on the benefits and challenges of structuring the evaluation on two components: a multi-faceted theoretical model of scale up and nine program- defined Essential Elements of implementation.



## **(#13) The Times They are A-changin'**

Greg Brandell, Briana Brenner, and Michael Rzemien, University of Washington

Designed to understand visitor interactions with exhibit elements, a summative evaluation of the "Changes" gallery at the Seattle's Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) was conducted. A timing and tracking and an exit interview study were used to understand what interpretive elements and content visitors utilized and personally connected with.



## **(#14) Data in the Wild: Lessons from Ocean Tracks - College Edition**

Dolly Hayde, Lifelong Learning Group

This poster explores how a data-driven science education project has strategically applied evaluation findings to support educators in teaching the processes of scientific thinking and strong science communication. Key findings from an initial needs assessment, as well as ongoing formative evaluation, will reflect major considerations for teaching with real-world data.



## **(#15) Measuring Beyond Program Evaluation: Strategic Visioning of an Education Department**

Dolly Hayde and Elaine Horr, Lifelong Learning Group

This poster explores methodology developed for the systematic measurement of the education department at an American zoo: community needs assessment, program observation, and program participant feedback. Findings will help to create unifying messages and lead to more intentional educational programming as part of the strategic visioning for the education department.



## **(#16) RAWR! Tweet Tweet! An Evaluation of the Addition of a Living Component to Pacific Science Center's Exhibit Dinosaurs: A Journey Through Time**

Michelle Reichelt, Calie Holden, and Sena Dawes, University of Washington & Pacific Science Center

This evaluation is a collaboration between University of Washington Museology graduate students and the Pacific Science Center. This evaluation examines visitors' engagement with the Dinosaurs: A Journey Through Time exhibit and determines if and how the inclusion of live components affects their experience.



 **(#17) Response to Contemporary Art Lab vs. Museum Setting**

*Andrea Granell and Jordi Segura, Ramon Llull University*

This study shows how younger and older adults respond to contemporary art viewed first in a lab setting, viewing four artworks in a computer (neutral experience) and then, the same artworks on display in the Contemporary Art Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (real experience).

 **(#18) 36 Visitors, 2.5 Years of Feedback, 1 Current Research Exhibit**

*Chris Cadenhead, Pacific Science Center*

It's not really exhibit prototyping. It's definitely not a focus group. But it's not an advisory group either. The Studio Visitor Project is a quasi-longitudinal exhibit evaluation study meant to gather feedback – mostly formative in nature – from 36 Pacific Science Center visitor groups every six months for three years.

 **(#19) Culturally Responsive Evaluation: Practical Implications for Design and Data**

*Stephanie Downy and Katie Chandler, Randi Korn & Associates*

How does a culturally responsive framework influence evaluation design and help evaluators generate data that is reliable, valid, and useful to its audience? Drawing on some of the core tenets of culturally responsive evaluation (CRE), we explore a practical example of CRE and its implications for design, data collection, and analysis.

 **(#20) Through the Makers' Eyes: A Personalized Approach to Makerspace Evaluation**

*Rebecca Teasdale, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Makerspaces are increasingly common in museums and libraries, but what methods can we use to evaluate them? This poster shares methods and findings from a pilot study that sought to place the makers at the center of the inquiry and evaluate the program through the lens of their experience.

 **(#21) Visualizing Change: Evaluating Pre-recorded Projections, Narratives, Training and Tools**

*John Fraser, Rebecca Norlander, and Su-Jen Roberts, New Knowledge Organization Ltd.; Billy Spitzer and John Anderson, New England Aquarium; Julie Sweetland, Frameworks Institute*

This poster presents how evaluation supported the development of NOAA funded Visualizing Change national distribution and training tools supporting pre-recorded digital visualizations for use with Magic Planet, Science on the Sphere, and Large format flat screen live presentations at aquariums, zoos, science centers, and other informal learning venues.

 **(#22) Head Start on Engineering: Conceptualizing Early Childhood Engineering Interest Development**

*Scott Pattison, Institute for Learning Innovation*

Head Start on Engineering is an NSF-funded project designed to develop and refine a theoretical model of early childhood engineering interest development. In this poster, we will present the current version of the model, which builds on the four-phase model of interest development, lines of practice theory, and distributed cognition.

 **(#23) Researching the Value of Educator Actions on Learning (REVEAL)**

*Scott Pattison and Smirla Ramos-Montañez, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry*

Although it is widely assumed that museum educators have a positive impact on family learning, this assumption has never rigorously been tested. In this poster, we will present findings from a quasi-experimental study with 263 family groups to test the impact of staff facilitation and identify factors influencing facilitation outcomes.

 **(#24) Analyzing How Interpreters Model Sense-making at an Interactive Digital Exhibit**

*Brian Slattery, Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago*

How do interpreters (museum educators) use the wealth of resources at exhibits to enrich visitor learning? I analyze how interpreters incorporate exhibit resources into their conversations, as they model the process of sense-making. This poster presents a coding approach for connections between resources, using an excerpt from an interpreter/visitor conversation.

 **(#25) Uniting Big and Little Data to Understand Visitor Behavior**

*Jessica Roberts, University of Illinois at Chicago; Matt Matcuk, Field Museum; Amartya Banerjee, Steven McGee, and Michael Horn, Northwestern University*

This poster presents preliminary findings from an ongoing study combining Google Analytics data from touchscreen interactives, in-person timing and tracking observations, and data from a custom-built mobile Bluetooth tracking app in order to advance our understanding of how Big and little data can be used to understand the visitor experience.

# Friday, July 17 Conference Schedule

3:15 – 4:45 p.m.

SPONSORED BY:



**Poster Session**  
Grand Ballroom



**(#26) Room to Rise: The Lasting Impact of Teen Programs in Museums**

*Heather Maxson, Whitney Museum of American Art*

Drawing on reflections and input from hundreds of teen program alumni across the United States, this study documents powerful effects for participants, including lasting engagement with arts and culture, significant personal and professional development, and increased leadership skills and civic engagement.

5:30 – 9:30 p.m.

**Dinner and Museum Circulator**

\$50

Grand Ballroom Terrace

Gather together for drinks and dinner at the Hyatt Hotel before exploring the city on our very own museum circulator! Some of Boston's great museums keep their doors open late in the summer, and we are going to take full advantage. Grab some dinner with other conference attendees, and then hop onto the circulator bus to head to different museums.

*Pre-registration is required for this event. Ticket includes dinner and admission to the circulator bus. Cash bar available.*

SPONSORED BY:



CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Lifelong Learning Group

6:00 – 9:30 p.m.

**Museum Circulator**

\$10

Hyatt Hotel – Museum of Fine Art – Boston Common – Museum of Science – Boston Children's Museum

Skip dinner, but take a ride on the circulator to a number of museums and gardens around the city. Buses will rotate through these locations until 9:30 p.m., allowing VSA members to hop on and off as they please. Directions for getting back to the hotel from each stop are also provided, should you wander off or miss the last bus!

*Pre-registration is required. Dinner is not included with this ticket.*

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Lifelong Learning Group

# The COSI Center for Research and Evaluation along with our Lifelong Learning Group

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We thank David for ten-plus years of leadership and support of visitor studies as we strive to inspire all lifelong learners.

COSI warmly invites you to Columbus next summer  
for the **2017 Visitor Studies Conference!**

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# Saturday, July 18 Conference Schedule

**7:30 – 9:00 a.m.**

**Coffee Break**

[Grand Ballroom Foyer](#)

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.**

**Membership Committee Meeting**

[Adrienne](#)

**9:00 – 10:15 a.m.**

**Concurrent Sessions – VI**

## **Getting in Touch with Emotional Engagement**

*Christine Reich and Sunewan Chunhasuwan, Museum of Science, Boston; Gabrielle Rappolt-Schlichtmann, CAST*

**Stream: Methodology**

[Concord](#)

Emotion is a powerful mediator of learning that requires unique measurement approaches. In this session, participants will engage in an interactive discussion of methods, data, findings, and implications from a cross-disciplinary study of emotional engagement in informal learning. Measures to be demonstrated include eye tracking, skin conductance, and experience sampling.

### **Session Key**

 **Individual Project/Paper Presentations**

 **Panel Presentations**

 **Roundtable Discussion**

 **Working Group**

 **Hands-on Workshop**

 **Poster Presentations**

 **Fireside Chat**

## **A Multitude of Methods for Diverse Audiences**

*Claire Thoma Emmons, Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Alexander Lussenhop, Museum of Science, Boston; Renae Youngs, Minnesota State Arts Board*

**Stream: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion AND Evaluation 101**

[Plymouth](#)

Join us for a methods swap focused on tips and strategies for making instruments and methods more inclusive of diverse visitors, including young children, visitors with physical or cognitive disabilities, or visitors from different cultural backgrounds. Opportunities for practicing these ideas and sharing your own experience will abound!

## **Beyond Surveys: Tech-Savvy Methods to Engage, Capture, and Drive Action**

*Elaine Horr and Gary Timko, COSI; Kate Livingston, ExposeYourMuseum LLC; Amy Niedbalski, Saint Louis Zoo*

**Stream: Methodology AND Evaluation 101**

[Duxbury](#)

Need to collect and analyze a lot of data quickly? A way to engage with diverse audiences? Or ancillary methods to support your traditional data collection methods? Join us as we explore effective solutions for these situations and others – and bring your ideas to workshop as well.

## **Approaches to Video Analysis: Studying Learning and Catalyzing Reflection**

*Scott Pattison, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Lisa Brahms and Peter Wardrip, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh; Kevin Crowley, University of Pittsburgh*

**Stream: Methodology**

[Dedham](#)

Despite the increasing availability and affordability of video recording

technology, video data can be challenging to analyze. In this session, presenters will share two distinct approaches to analyzing video of informal learning and leveraging that video to facilitate reflective discussions with researchers and educators.

## **Roundtable Discussions**

[Adrienne](#)

## **Mission Impossible?: Mission Statements and Strategic Planning**

*Patience Baach, The Field Museum; Andrea Giron Mathern, Denver Museum of Nature and Science*

**Stream: Organizational Change and Capacity Building**

This roundtable discussion will focus on why mission statements and strategic plans are valuable for internal evaluation departments. How can vision and mission statements for the department project autonomy and confidence within an organization? We will discuss our writing process, statements, and look at other examples to help facilitate conversation.

## **Publish Your Work: Chat With the Editors**

*John Fraser, New Knowledge Organization Ltd.; Elee Wood, IUPUI; Steven Guberman*

**Stream: Reporting Findings**

In this Roundtable, the editor of VSA's journal, Visitor Studies, the editor of Curator, and the editor of Museums and Social Issues will review the publication processes, focuses, and audiences of three journals available for publishing the work of visitor studies professionals.

**10:30 – 11:45 a.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – VII**

 **Fireside Chat with  
Julie Johnson**

*Julie Johnson, National Science  
Foundation*

**Stream: Big Questions and Field-wide  
Issues**

[Terry's Corner](#)

Data, evaluation, and research have changed in their use, utility, and requirements throughout the field. As efforts are clarified and solidified, RFPs, directions and strategic plans, and funding streams may shift in their use of data. Reflecting on the field of informal learning from a federal perspective, Julie Johnson will speak briefly about how data of all types are analyzed, used, considered, and applied to making decisions about grants, funding streams, future directions, etc. before moving to a discussion with conference participants about the use of data at all levels.

*Terry's Corner is located off of the Avenue  
One bar in the Hyatt Hotel lobby.*

 **Shaking It Up: Finding New  
Ways to Use Existing Data**

*Stephen Ashton, Thanksgiving Point  
Institute; Elaine Horr, Center of Science  
and Industry; Elisa Israel, Saint Louis  
Science Center; Joyce Ma, Exploratorium*

**Stream: Methodology**

[Sturbridge](#)

This interactive session will explore ways in which data can be repurposed for uses that differ from why it was collected originally. Panelists will share examples from their own work and, using a Fishbowl discussion format, will encourage others to ask questions and share their own experiences.

 **Exhibition Tracking-and-Timing  
Data: What's It Good For?**

*Beverly Serrell, Serrell & Associates*

**Stream: Methodology**

[Duxbury](#)

This workshop session will actively review several methods of analysis and visualization to support conclusions and implications of tracking and timing (T&T) data. Not a workshop on how to do T&T, but rather, what conclusions and generalizations about visitor behavior in exhibitions can we draw from it.

 **What Does Data have to do with  
Social Justice?**

*Cecilia Garibay, Garibay Group; Kenneth  
Morris and Swarupa Anila, Detroit  
Institute of Arts; Marjorie Bequette,  
Science Museum of Minnesota; Noah  
Weeth Feinstein, University of Wisconsin  
Madison*

**Stream: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion**

[Dedham](#)

Museums are continually challenged in becoming more inclusive organizations. Data generated from research and evaluation can facilitate organization learning and the development of more inclusive and equitable practices. This session discusses examples from several studies of ways organizations are using data for organizational learning and transforming practices.

 **From Wow! to Why?: Building  
Science Literacy with Data  
Visualization**

*Dolly Hayde, Lifelong Learning Group;  
Emily Yam, Aquarium of the Pacific;  
Stephen Uzzo, New York Hall of Science*

**Stream: Research Findings**

[Plymouth](#)

Data about learners support program decision-making, but how can connecting learners with data improve science literacy and process skills?

Presenters will discuss strategies for illuminating complex data sets with a range of technological platforms, as well as how audience data has informed their work. Attendees will then raise additional perspectives and questions in a larger conversation.

 **Paper Presentations**

[Adrienne](#)

 **Understanding the Visitor  
Experience: Spatial, Visual and  
Verbal Data**

*Pippa Gardner, University of Sheffield/  
Museums Sheffield*

**Stream: Methodology**

Using visitor research from Weston Park Museum (Sheffield, UK), this presentation will explore advantages and limitations of methods for collecting spatial data informed by understandings of space and place from Human Geography. Templates for recording participant observations and the draw-and-write method will be shared and analysis techniques will be discussed.

 **Visitors Stories: What Can They  
Tell Us?**

*Tsivia Cohen, Chicago Children's  
Museum; Catherine Haden, Loyola  
University*

**Stream: Methodology**

Story Hub creates and sends short videos featuring visitors' joint narratives about what they did at Chicago Children's Museum that day. Hear how an informal analysis of these conversations has helped the museum better understand its current exhibits and the value visitors place on their museum experiences.

# Saturday, July 18 Conference Schedule

**12:00 – 1:30 p.m.**  
**Closing Luncheon**

Free (Ticket Required)

[Grand Ballroom](#)

**SPONSORED BY:**



**Keynote Speaker**

*Matthew Berland*

Matthew Berland is an Assistant Professor of Digital Media in Curriculum and Instruction,

Computer Sciences, and Library & Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is also director of the Learning Games Play Data Consortium—a national consortium of learning scientists, educational researchers, and designers dedicated to helping people better use data to understand how people learn with games and play. He uses design-based research, learning analytics, and data mining to create and analyze constructionist learning environments supporting students’ creativity in learning computer science and engineering, especially in museums, libraries, and after-school programs.

*Event includes lunch.*

**2:00 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**Concurrent Sessions – VII**

**CAISE Knowledge Base Edit-a-Thon (register in advance)**

*Grace Troxel and Patricia Montano, CAISE; Kevin Crowley, University of Pittsburgh*

**Stream: Methodology**  
[Dedham](#)

At this interactive working meeting, participants will contribute to and create articles on informal science education topics for the newly developed Knowledge Base (formerly the ISE Evidence Wiki) on InformalScience.org. Articles in the Knowledge Base are intended to be evidence-supported claims that can be referenced when developing proposals or “making the case” for a strategy or approach to funders and stakeholders, as well as to see what is known and emerging in the field. We welcome you to add your expertise to the Knowledge Base!

## Post-Conference Workshop

Saturday, July 18

**Registration is required**

**Half Day Workshop**  
2 – 5 p.m.

**Planning, Designing, and Evaluating Post-Visit Content for Visitors**

*Christine Van Winkle and Jill Bueddefeld, University of Manitoba*



[Duxbury](#)



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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 2015 – 2017

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Co-Chairs: Lynn Courtney and Rita Deedrick

Members: Macrus Harshaw, Anna Johnson, and Ellen Roth

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 sponsorships.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Patsy Reublin

Members: Sarah Cohn, Kim Kiehl, Kathleen Lawson

The Finance Committee is charged with reviewing the financial processes and systems that are facilitated by VSA's contractors. The Finance Committee works tightly with the Treasurer and the Association Manager to ensure all aspects of the financial accounting are transparent, followed, and documented.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vice President: Elee Wood

### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Camellia Sanford

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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.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Jennifer Borland

Members: Elsa Bailey, Erin Gong, Taline A. Kuyumjian, Lauren Wilson, Jason Allen, Julia Miller, Claire Quimby, and Lauren Messenger

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 providing professional development and recognition opportunities based on VSA's professional standards, including workshops & webinars, the April Award and Student Scholarships and informal professional development "hangouts."

## OUTREACH

Vice President: Michelle Maghari

### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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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 current and prospective members get acquainted with each other, learn and share about visitor studies, get the most out of VSA experiences and offerings, and collaborate to advance the field.

# Thank You to our 2016 Conference Donors and Sponsors

The 29th 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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# VSA

Visitor Studies Association

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# *BETTER EVALUATION MAKES BETTER EXHIBITS*



Roto is pleased to announce that Places of Invention, which recently opened at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, is the recipient of the 2016 SHOT (Society for the History of Technology) Dibner Award for Excellence in Exhibitions. The exhibit, developed in collaboration with the Lemelson Center for Invention and Innovation, traces the rise and fall of innovative “hot spots” throughout American History. Extensive visitor testing, evaluation and exhibit prototyping was an essential part of the design-build process, which enabled Roto to refine the custom interactive experiences to ensure that visitors were both having fun and engaging with the exhibition’s rich content.



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