



## 2016 ASTC Annual Conference

September 24–27, 2016

Tampa, Florida

Hosted by MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry)

## About the ASTC Annual Conference

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference is the premier professional development event for the science center and museum field. Offering approximately 120 high-quality sessions, the conference reaches more than 1,800 science center and museum professionals at all career stages, representing the organizational and geographic diversity of the field.

**Conference Goals** - The program and content of the ASTC Annual Conference are designed to:

- **Inspire** attendees, both personally and professionally, through exciting and engaging speakers and experiences
- **Build capacity** through high-quality sessions that share knowledge and practices among individuals and organizations
- **Strengthen relationships** that connect people and organizations in ways that advance informal science education
- **Highlight innovations** in every aspect of informal science education and museum practice
- **Focus on reflection and feedback** to strengthen the field by learning from past successes or challenges

By submitting a proposal, you are contributing to the professional development of your colleagues and advancing the field of informal science education. Please reflect the conference goals in your proposal.

# Content Priorities – Disruptive Innovation

Science centers began as a disruption to the museum concept, introducing new attitudes and approaches toward visitors and informal learning. Over time, these practices have influenced the museum community as a whole in terms of exhibit and program design as well as operations, management, and guest experience.

Today, disruption is the new normal. Business and technology sectors in particular have adapted to a rapid flux of ideas and innovations that create new opportunities while disrupting long-standing accepted practice. In the informal learning sector, science centers now compete with disruptors such as TED talks, maker faires, social media, and online experiences.

How do science centers maintain their audiences in the face of such disruption? And how can science centers harness these innovations to enhance their mission?

The impacts of these new ways of working go well beyond education and exhibit design: science centers must adapt their marketing, management, and fundraising strategies to reflect the changing paradigm. How can science centers market their unique offerings in the context of competitive disruptors in education and entertainment? How do management structures adapt to rapid changes in the larger informal learning landscape? How can fundraising professionals engage donors in programmatic and educational offerings associated with these disruptors while maintaining essential operating dollars and funds for established programming?

Session proposals that concern themselves with disruptive innovation—as articulated above or otherwise relevant to the topic—are highly encouraged, and will be given priority by the Conference Program Planning Committee reviewers. Session descriptions should articulate:

- what disruption(s) the session content responds to
- why a response is of priority to the field
- how the session will provide support and/or guidance for action

## Proposal Types

**Sessions:** Concurrent sessions are 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) long. Flash sessions are 10 minutes long, and will be combined by the review panel into three 75-minute sessions placed throughout the conference. A limited number of extended sessions (2-hour duration) will be available and may be requested on the online submission form.

**Posters:** Want to share project results, exhibition advances, or new ideas in a graphic format? Select this presentation style to have your poster included in timed groupings that will be placed in visible conference areas for limited intervals. Presenters are expected to attend their designated session time to engage with their colleagues.

**Preconference workshop:** Half-day or full-day paid workshops that take place on Friday, September 23, 2016. All workshops include food and beverage, plus transportation if necessary. All presenters must pay designated registration fees for the workshop, but session leaders are exempt. Preregistration is required.

## Topical Tracks

In order to support the growth and development of both attendees and the field at large, ASTC encourages the development of session proposals that will advance the field in both thought and practice. The 11 tracks listed below reflect major areas of work in science centers and priorities for the field. Proposals that focus on operational aspects of science center practice are especially encouraged. These include sessions that present advances in Administration; Development and Member Relations; Communications; Public Relations and Marketing; and Staff and Workforce Development.

### Global Perspectives

Befitting ASTC's role as a global organization, and because many sessions would benefit from a geographically diverse panel of speakers, ASTC is interested in promoting topics, viewpoints, and speakers representing a global perspective in as many sessions as possible. We strongly recommend that session proposals include speakers from all over the world. For assistance in refining topics or identifying international speakers to add to your session proposal, please contact Walter Staveloz, ASTC's director of international relations, at [wstaveloz@astc.org](mailto:wstaveloz@astc.org).

Proposals must indicate **ONE** of the topical tracks listed below that best categorizes the main topic of the session.

- **Administration:** sessions focused on finances, business practices, facilities, risk management, etc.
- **Applications of Research and Evaluation:** sessions focused on research and evaluation methods and how these findings can be applied to mission fulfillment
- **Communications, Public Relations, and Marketing:** sessions focused on techniques and results of organizational communications in science center practice via any media platform, including marketing practices
- **Community Engagement and Outreach:** sessions focused on programming to serve community constituencies, collaborations with community organizations like universities, libraries, and afterschool providers, and diversity and inclusion efforts
- **Development and Member Relations:** sessions focused on general development and membership strategies, relations with individual donors, corporations, and foundations, etc.
- **Education and Programming:** sessions focused on models and outcomes of educational programming, including demonstrations, hands-on labs, theater, youth programs, adult events, teacher professional support, etc.

- **Exhibits and Environments:** sessions focused on development and design of any science learning environment (physical or virtual, in museums or in public spaces), and trends affecting design and development approaches
- **Immersive Media and Experiences:** sessions focused on development and programming related to planetariums, large-format films, stereoscopic theaters, simulators, and related environments
- **Innovations in Science and Technology:** sessions focused on STEM research collaborations, emerging technologies, etc.
- **Leadership:** sessions focused on issues of governance, strategic vision, mission fulfillment, and organizational/field strategies for the future
- **Staff and Workforce Development:** sessions focused on development and support of the science center professional workforce, from skill building to career pathways, including staff roles like volunteer management, human resources, visitor services, etc.

## Formats

Review the list of available formats below and select the one that will best involve the audience and create the most effective learning opportunity based on the content of your session. All sessions are non-commercial and avoid endorsement of services or products.

- **Café:** A moderated session that opens with short presentations of 3-5 minutes per presenter (maximum of 3 presenters), followed by roundtable discussions so that the audience can interact with presenters. A session leader articulates the issues, and facilitates both the discussion and wrap-up.
- **Flash Session:** A short (10-minute) presentation especially suited for reporting project results or presenting program outcomes. Presenters should submit Flash presentations individually using the online form, and be sure to select the corresponding duration option (10 minutes). Individual presentations will be combined by the program committee into a limited number of collective sessions based on theme or topic.
- **Forum:** An open discussion on specific issues with one or more session leaders to moderate group conversation.
- **Panel:** A session with three to four presenters in a moderated panel discussion, followed by 15-20 minutes of Q&A. Diverse panels should consider each participating institution's geography, size, type, and budget.
- **Hands-on, Minds-on Exploration:** A program for a limited number of participants around a specific theme, emphasizing participation and interactivity, with one or more hands-on activities; 60 maximum participants.
- **Posters:** The poster session is a visual presentation of an author's work—using graphs, photographs, diagrams, and any sample educational materials developed—on a poster board. Presenters are expected to attend their designated session time to engage with their colleagues.

# Proposal Submission Instructions

**Session Leader/Contact** – Each proposal must identify ONE session leader (contact) who will be responsible for the organization and management of the session, including logistics, requests for audiovisual equipment, communication with presenters and ASTC staff, and leading the session itself. All correspondence related to the proposal will be directed to the session leader listed on the submitted form. *NOTE: Individuals are limited to participating in three (3) accepted sessions; you may be asked to replace a presenter who is listed for more than three accepted sessions.*

**Registration Fees** – Session leaders and presenters must register for the annual conference. Session presenter(s) may receive a free pass only for the session(s) in which they are participating upon request and approval of the ASTC Conference Department. If non-member presenters wish to attend other sessions, events, and visit the Exhibit Hall, they may register at the discounted member rate. Session leaders are responsible for making sure all of their presenters register for the conference and pay for any workshop with a fee attached.

**Session Room Logistics** – Sessions are 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) long; Flash sessions are 10 minutes long, and will be combined by the review panel into three 75-minute sessions placed throughout the conference. A limited number of extended sessions (2-hour duration) will be available and may be requested on the online submission form. Poster presentations will be held in timed sessions in a specified area. All session rooms will have a projector and screen, microphones, sound, and internet connection. The room set-up will be a combination of round tables and theater-style seating.

Requests for other options for room furnishings and layout or other needs **MUST** be indicated in the “Special Needs, Requests, and Comments” section of the online form. It is possible that requests cannot be accommodated, and may result in non-acceptance of the session.

**Proposal Criteria** – Prepare session content beforehand to ensure completeness, adherence to word limits and avoidance of typographical errors. Please note that special characters (i.e., #, @, &) and bullets are not supported in the online proposal form. **Incomplete session proposals will not be considered for review.**

Session proposals will be rated based on the following criteria:

1. The topic is of high intellectual merit and contributes to the advancement of the field.
2. Session content demonstrates timely, strategic, and/or innovative thinking.
3. The description clearly articulates attendees' experiences and/or takeaways.
4. Speakers and panelists are appropriate for the session and represent multiple perspectives. It is encouraged that session participants are from more than one organization or institution, and should include diversity with respect to each participating institution's geography, size, type, and budget.
5. Session actively involves the audience, in a manner appropriate to the session format and content.

Please contact Nina Humes, conference manager, at [NHumes@astc.org](mailto:NHumes@astc.org) with any questions regarding the proposal process or form.

## Online Proposal Form Overview

**Session Title:** 15-word maximum. Be descriptive but concise.

**Session Summary:** 50-word maximum. This paragraph will serve as your session's entry in both the preliminary and final conference programs. Please be clear about what you will cover.

**Presenters:** List information for all presenters.

**Session Description:** 200-word maximum. Describe the session in more detail for the Conference Program Planning Committee. Include the topics to be covered, what will happen during the session, expected learning objectives, and form of audience engagement.

**Session Track:** Select the appropriate track for session content.

**Session Format:** Choose a session format that is appropriate for the intended audience and session content.

**Special Needs, Requests, and Comments:** Use this section to request options for room furnishings and layout or other needs, additional A/V equipment, or explain a special circumstance that the reviewers should know about as they evaluate your session proposal.

### Enter Your Proposal Online

- Go to [www.astc.org/conference/future-conferences](http://www.astc.org/conference/future-conferences) to submit your proposal.
- Cut and paste your proposal into the appropriate fields of the online form.
- After you submit, print a copy of the confirmation, which will include your personal web link, login ID number, and password, to edit your proposal during the submission period. If you need to make changes to your proposal after the submission deadline, please email [conference@astc.org](mailto:conference@astc.org) with your changes.

### Dates to Remember

Session Proposal Submission Deadline is December 4, 2015.

Notification of acceptance into 2016 program will be sent in February 2016.