



Summary of Evaluation Findings

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Connecting Society with Science

The Greater Potential of
Giant Screen Experiences

Symposium

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Hyatt Regency Jersey City on the Hudson



**All photographic images courtesy of James Hyder*



Evaluation Questions

- **To what extent did the symposium accomplish the goals described in the proposal to the NSF?**
- How many individuals attended and how can we characterize this group?
- How did participants find out about the event? What were their expectations?
- To what extent did they take advantage of materials provided before the event?
- What were their reactions to the symposium structure?
- What did they find most and least valuable about the symposium?
- What were the most interesting things they learned?
- To what extent did they *expect* to follow-up on or apply what they learned?
- To what extent did they *actually* follow-up or apply something they learned?

Evaluation Methods

1. Online symposium registration form
2. Anonymous feedback through:
 - Paper survey completed right before symposium
 - Paper survey completed right after symposium
 - Online survey completed 9 months after symposium



Symposium/evaluation participants

- Number of participants attending Symposium (non-affiliated): 75
- Number of participants completing pre-survey: 65
- Number of participants completing post-survey: 62
- Number of participants completing follow-up survey: 30



Participant background information (n=65)		
Gender	Male	58%
	Female	42%
Age Group	Age range	24-71
	Mean	49
Industry segment represented	Producer	37%
	Exhibitor	32%
	Educator	11%
	Distributor	9%
	Student	8%
	Other	9%

How did participants learn about the Symposium?

Email announcement to GSCA members	28%
GSCA website	20%
GSCA e-news	18%
Work or school	15%
Lifelong learning committee	12%
Direct invitation	8%
Email announcement to ASTC listserv	3%
Other	3%

How many 2008 symposium participants also attended the 1999 symposium? (n=65)

No	80%
Yes	18%
Don't remember	2%

Main reasons for not attending

(asked in follow-up survey, n=30)

- Not part of the industry at the time (40%)
 - Didn't know about the event (27%)



The Pre-Symposium Materials

- Information on the 1999 symposium
- Welcoming letters, acknowledgements
- Suggestions for preparing the for event
- Filmmakers' papers
- Invited speakers' papers, student scholarship and award papers
- Photographs
- Biographies of filmmakers and speakers
- Suggested additional readings
- List of symposium registrants
- Partial list of registrants' expectations
- Chronological list of giant screen films 1970-2008.

**How valuable did participants find
the Symposium Preparatory Materials? (n=65)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not all valuable					5.4			Extremely valuable

On a scale of 1 to 7....

- ratings ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 7
- the mean rating for the group was 5.4

Were participants more likely to read and respond to some papers more than others? (n=65)

Chance to read?	Get to formulate response?	Advance Papers
54%	12%	<i>Giant Screen Films and Lifelong Learning</i>
48%	14%	<i>Grand Challenge for the Giant Screen</i>
48%	11%	<i>Science and Visual Communication</i>
45%	9%	<i>Picturing Science</i>
42%	9%	<i>The Inconvenience of Truth: Rethinking the Agency of Science Film Spectators in a Post-Postmodern Era</i>
40%	12%	<i>Museum Predicaments: (Re) Considering Institutional Forms and Controversy in Global Risk Society</i>
35%	5%	<i>Using Telepresence to Communicate Science in Giant Screen Cinema</i>
37%	9%	<i>The 12 Step Program (for Communicating 82 Science): Mind the Gap!</i>
35%	6%	<i>An Urgent Challenge</i>

Post-Symposium Survey Findings

Symposium Schedule

7:15 am Networking Breakfast Pre-survey
8:15 am Welcome Remarks
8:30 am Montage of GSCA Best Films for Learning Award Winners
9:30 am Speakers
10:50-11:00 am Coffee Break
12:30 pm Lunch
1:30 pm Breakout session 1 (Report out 2:25-3:00 pm)
3:00 pm Coffee Break
3:20 pm Breakout session 2 (Report out 4:15-4:50 pm)
4:50 pm Final remarks
5:00 pm Post-survey
5:30 pm Reception
6:00 pm Dinner
7:50 pm Final thoughts

How did participants rate the symposium in terms of overall organization and usefulness? (n=62)

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Neutral 4	Somewhat agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
The symposium was well run.	6.6						
Attending the symposium was a good use of my time.	6.3						
I acquired knowledge at the symposium that would have been difficult to obtain without being there in person.	6.1						
I received sufficient information about the symposium agenda before I attended.	5.8						

**To what extent were participants involved
in the symposium as suggested in
The Symposium Preparatory Materials? (n=62)**

Networked with others at the symposium	87%
Discussed information presented at the symposium during the break-out discussion	81%
Thinking about best practices was broadened, deepened, or challenged	74%
Asked questions about the information presented at the symposium during the question periods	16%

Note: while 87% reported networking at the event, only 17% of registrants listed this as an expectation prior to attending.

What did participants find most valuable about the symposium? (n=62)

Speaker presentations <i>(engaging, thought-provoking, offered diverse viewpoints)</i>	52%
Discussion sessions <i>(Reinforced information learned, offered different viewpoints, enabled brainstorming and thinking ahead to applications)</i>	34%
Meeting others/networking	10%
Reading the Symposium Preparatory Materials	8%

What did participants find to be least valuable about the symposium? (n=62)

Presentations <i>(too academic/theoretical, dense, lacked relevance, too similar to papers)</i>	27%
Discussions <i>(questions hard to follow, report-out too long, sessions redundant)</i>	21%
Nothing/all was valuable	18%
Schedule <i>(too long/too much)</i>	8%
Film clips <i>(had seen before/waste of time)</i>	8%
Other	8%
Left blank	10%

What did participants feel were the most interesting things they learned from the symposium?

	(n=62)
New/challenging/controversial film topics discussed	31%
Visual communication research – <i>neuropsychology findings</i>	19%
Industry statistics/trends/opportunities	11%
Storytelling – <i>need for compelling story, characters, images</i>	11%
Producer - museum relations	6%
Use of multiple media platforms	5%
Other	11%

Note: While the top pick for interesting things learned involved new/challenging/controversial film topics, only 2% of registrants listed this as an expectation of the event prior to attending.

**How much knowledge did participants feel they had about the potential of giant screen films to communicate science to the public?
(Pre → Post mean ratings, n=62)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
No knowledge					4.2	→	5.5	Extensive knowledge

After the symposium participants felt they had significantly more knowledge than before. The group mean rating increased from 4.2 to 5.5.

Participants' feedback on presentations



How valuable did participants find the speaker presentations overall? (n=62)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all valuable								Extremely valuable
						5.5		

Note: significant difference in ratings between producers (mean 4.9) and exhibitors (6.0).



Did participants feel there were too many speaker presentations? (n=62)

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Neutral 4	Somewhat agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
The symposium included too many speaker presentations.	3.9						

To what extent did participants feel that the speakers exposed them to new ways of thinking about science communication? (n=62)

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Neutral 4	Somewhat agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
The speakers exposed me to new ways of thinking about communicating science to the public.	5.7						

Note: significant difference in ratings between producers (mean 5.1) and exhibitors (6.3).

Participant feedback on the discussion sessions



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How did participants rate the discussion sessions? (n=62)

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Neutral 4	Somewhat agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
I enjoyed participating in the group discussions.	5.8						
Our “Breakout Session 2” group discussion effectively considered issues of science subject area and goals.	5.5						
Our “Breakout Session 1” group discussion effectively considered issues of film development guidelines.	5.2						
I would have preferred the Symposium set aside more time for participants to relate the information presented to their own experiences.	4.1						



Did participants feel the symposium format offered the right balance of presentations vs. discussion?

Just the right balance

69%

Too much emphasis on presentations

16%

Too much emphasis on break-out sessions

13%

Did participants have suggestions for a different format that might work even better?

Not really...

(suggestions focused on tweaking the sessions or their relationship to one another).

Suggestions for Speaker sessions...

- Have speakers expand upon, don't repeat papers
- Invite fewer presenters/give speakers more than 12 minutes to address issues of: information overload, sense of being too compressed or disjointed
- Decrease academic/theoretical emphasis or build in way for speakers to find way to better connect how their work relates to the giant screen industry
- Allow participants to pre-submit questions to presenters

Suggestions for discussion sessions...

- Tie more closely to presentations
- Have first discussion session follow first group of presenters, then do same for next group – to allow for more focused thinking
- Increase focus on applications – how to translate information from speaker sessions and use in field
- Shorten report out periods to address too many reports/redundancy in reporting
- Stretch over 2 days to allow for more creative and applied thinking
- Develop another discussion format that doesn't encourage "film-by-committee" thinking or "group-think" which may yield predictable ideas
- Introduce break-out groups online before symposium

What actions did participants expect to take after the symposium? (n=62)

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Neutral 4	Somewhat agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
I will complete the survey that will be sent to me in six months after the symposium	6.3						
I will think about ways that I can enhance the potential of giant screen for connecting science in society.	6.1						
I will consider ways to implement what I have learned at the symposium.	5.9						
I will disseminate information to others in the industry or in my workplace who could not attend.	5.9						
I will continue to question and discuss the symposium content.	5.8						
I will participate in or start discussions about giant screen issues on the new GSCA listserv.	4.4						

Note: significant difference in ratings producers (mean 5.3) and exhibitors (6.4).

How did participants expect to apply what they learned at the symposium? (n=62)

Share/discuss/collaborate with others	32%
Seek more knowledge/think more deeply	18%
Pursue more proactive marketing/outreach	13%
Explore new film topics	13%
Left question blank	27%

Nine month follow-up survey findings

Purpose

- To explore the longer term impact of the symposium – extent to which participants followed-up on or applied something they learned.

Method

- Survey invitation was sent via email by the symposium organizer
- Survey was hosted on the evaluator's website

Participant Information

- 30 participants completed the follow-up survey
- This group represented almost half (48%) of those who completed a post-event survey at the end of the symposium.
- Demographic and background approximated that of first survey group

Which of the suggested follow-up activities did participants pursue since attending the symposium?

Since the symposium, I have . . .	(n=30)
Questioned or discussed the symposium content	73%
Considered ways to implement what I learned	73%
Thought about ways that I could enhance the potential of giant screen films for connecting science in society	73%
Disseminated information to others within the industry or my workplace who could not attend.	50%
Networked with other symposium participants	40%

To what extent did participants follow-up on or apply what they learned about at the symposium?

Followed-up (n=30)	
Using multiple media/exhibits/ programs to extend the learning value of films	37%
Optimizing producer-museum relations/collaborations	30%
Using storytelling to inform filmmaking	27%
Using visual communication/ neuro-psychology research to inform filmmaking	23%
Exploring new, challenging, and/ or controversial film topics	20%

Applied (n=30)	
Using storytelling to inform filmmaking	37%
Exploring new, challenging, and/ or controversial film topics	37%
Using multiple media/exhibits/ programs to extend the learning value of films	20%
Optimizing producer-museum relations/collaborations	17%
Using visual communication/ neuro-psychology research to inform filmmaking	17%

Examples of what participants did...

- Forming a **new giant dome production consortium**.
- This is tough information to gather, because it asks for a direct 1-to-1 connection. (After re-reading my symposium notes I picked up the phone and **optimized my museum producer relationships**.) A tall order. I only went back through my notes once. I never sit down and review them prior to working on a script. But to some extent, some of those ideas must have seeped into the primordial soup of my subconscious mind, where they interact with other ideas already swimming around in there.
- **Checked out the book** "Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View (Film and Culture Series)" from the Wayne State Library to learn more about the immersive experience and using it to communicate educational content. **Added film related displays** in cabinets located in our IMAX entrance lobby. This included a large sturgeon replica and recovered shipwreck items that we connected to the *Mysteries of the Great Lakes* film. Other Topic: Racial/Ethnic **diversity physically shown in films** so that all audiences are drawn into the film, especially minorities that have not been well represented in most IMAX films.
- The **networking** has been brief, but has opened up opportunities for the future. The information shared in my workplace has been **incorporated into another NSF grant-funded** project -- actually taking some of our conversation at the symposium into action.
- I've actually **kept up with three people** who I'd not met before. It was a very useful symposium.
- **Shared** through a consulting work with others in a position to use the material.

Which industry areas did participants chose to apply information learned from the symposium? (n=30)

Film development or production	47%
Public education programs	43%
Exhibit development, renovation or expansion	23%
Staff development/enrichment	20%
Marketing	20%
K-12 student programs	17%
K-12 teacher education programs	13%
Distribution	13%
Volunteer/docent training	3%
Haven't yet applied anything learned	13%
Other	10%
Didn't learn anything new	0%

What types of challenges or obstacles did participants encounter in applying what they learned at the symposium? (n=30)

Financial constraints	60%
Competing institutional priorities	40%
Time constraints	37%
Other	13%
Haven't encountered obstacles/challenges	10%
Resistance to science themes	0%

Examples of other challenges to follow-up...

- *I thought quite a bit about the Symposium immediately after the event, but then not so much after that as I **lost touch with the people who attended**, and got busy with other things. But I'm still interested in the topic and even would like to conduct research on it (I'm an academic rather than an industry person).*
- *I probably would have done the things I did without having attended the symposium. I did not find the symposium to be set up for implementing new learning - **it was more of an intellectual exercise**.*
- *Somehow, and despite the fine quality of the papers presented, we **need to review what happened last year and understand why the impact of the workshop was not immediate**. In reviewing the papers for this survey I can see why. They were useful and in a number of cases extremely valuable to me, but they were **devoid of context** that would engage the GSCA membership. By this I mean the rapid transformation of the medium which has created a refocusing on what audiences want to see and will pay rather than what they should see for free. So while the need to focus on science and society issues and engage the public was taken as the new road for Giant Screen Films to travel, this needs to be re-examined in the aftermath of the advent of a major Recession. I agree with Cameron who concluded that the next three years will be the transition to a new era in museology. Felice Frankel's call to refocus on science as a visual treat and gateway to understanding needs to be explored on Giant Screens with truly High Resolution and exciting Imagery. Lastly, Lombard's call for "producers [to] use the audience's goal of entertainment to evoke telepresence with a vivid and impactful experience" they can meet their mission to engage the public in the worldview that includes science and technology as a vital part of post-modern culture.*

Participant suggestions on how to reinforce the Symposium's impact over time:

- Offer mentoring/shadowing/collaboration opportunities
- Disseminate message in multiple settings – use online discussion forums/listervs
- Broaden reach to other organizations – ASTC, AAM
- Nudge/prod participants to follow-up
- Develop/provide case studies of successful applications

Returning to opening questions...

To what extent did the symposium accomplish the goals described in the proposal to the NSF?

- Reached participation goal.
- Found that participants generally:
 - ✓ took advantage of materials provided before the event.
 - ✓ reacted positively to the symposium structure, yet had concrete suggestions for how to tweak both the speaker and discussion sessions.
 - ✓ found the symposium valuable, and were able to articulate specific aspects they found of most and least value.
 - ✓ were able to describe one or more new interesting things they learned.
 - ✓ both *expected* to follow-up on or apply something they learned from the event and then *actually* did so, but also had suggestions for how to further reinforce the event's impact over time.

How valuable participants found research projects being considered by the Lifelong Learning Committee

How valuable would you find...	Not at all valuable							Extremely valuable
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Audience research on K-12 school groups that attend giant screen Films								5.7
Audience research on adults/families that attend giant screen films								5.6
Studies of the educational impact of different film formats (e.g., 2D vs. 3D)								5.6
Studies on how supplemental media/exhibits/programs extend the learning value of films and could be more effective								5.3

