

Connecting the dots for a collective creativity – beginning and development of ISSM and tips

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## 1 . The beginning of ISSM

By the year 2000, the number of science museums has multiplied greatly with the implementation of science popularization policy in South Korea. Despite this explosive increase, thoughts on what should be inside its building, what kind of events and education is needed and what is the main content were not given an in-depth consideration. Everyone was busy injecting the content from advanced museum/centers and did not have a chance to reflect and advance its own capability. Moreover, a chance to visit and benchmark the advanced museum/centers was limited to a few and not much effort was spent in disseminating the gained knowledge. Each institution has a vastly different budget and staff number depending on its foundation (federal, public, private).

In this climate, the International Symposium of Science Museum started with the following vision. 1st, Search for the critical issues for the advancement of science museums at the international level. 2nd, provide a place of fusion of different fields and discussion not only for basic science and new technologies but also humanities, business, and art. 3rd, build an inter-personal network to nurture the next global science museum leaders. 4th, build practical ideas that can be applied for the advancement of science museums and aid to create economic benefit.

	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18
Theme	Science museums and creativity	New horizon for science & creativity in the science museum field	Future science museum, we desire	Dialogue between science and art	The spread of scientific culture based on imagination and creativity	Social responsibility of science	Art in science	Science museums in the 4th industrial revolution
Nation/ Participant	12/ 100	7/ 248	9/ 147	7/ 530	12/ 630	15/ 814	11/ 586	16/ 669

## 2. The ISSM so far

### Ⓐ The Gathering

Since the beginning in 2011, a unique theme was selected every year and internationally renowned speakers were invited to create a place of discussion among science museum, related industries, and academic associations. So far, science museum and creativity, future science museums, science popularization, spread of science culture, social responsibility and science museum, science and art and science in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution were discussed at the symposium. The theme is selected through a survey among national science museums. In the 8<sup>th</sup> ISSM at 2018, 669 participants from 16 nations came and overall satisfaction was 4.29 point (Likert 5 point scale). A high percentage of 91% for the usefulness of the symposium and 92% for the willingness to return were achieved.

### Ⓑ Many attempts

To encourage participation from science museum, the academic presentation session was incorporated in 2014. In the beginning, large portion of participant was taken up by academic associations such as science education and exhibition association. However, recently more than 70% of the presented papers are by science museum experts. It is very encouraging that the academic presentation session encourages practical researches applicable in the field. Now,

approximately 100 papers are presented every year covering the area of education, exhibition, research, and exhibition in science museum. In 2015, the Declaration of Vision for Development of Korean Science Museum, the reflective of the Mechelen declaration was announced to commemorate 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. For this event, 64 science museums were gathered to stand behind the common vision and mission. Additionally, work shop, cultural tour, CEO forum and networking events are organized.

### © Participants

The symposium started out as an internal event for a few working at science museums and 100 ~ 200 participants gathered to hear the talks from presenters. With the incorporation of an academic research presentation session, the number of participants grew dramatically to approx. 500. However, this led to losing the symposium's initial identity of a science museum event as the spotlight was taken by the academic presentation. The revision was made to encourage participation from science museum professionals in the planning stage of the symposium. Due to this effort, the balance of 60% museum professionals and 40% other was achieved and maintaining. Also, increasing participants pick anticipation for symposium program as the reason for attending the symposium (① Reason for attending the symposium ('15)53%→('18)33%, ② Anticipation for the symposium program ('15)32%→('18)45%). The number of returning participants are steadily increasing due to choosing different and relevant theme and speaker each year.



<ISSM2018: Nina Simon Keynote speech, Academic research presentation, Reception dinner, Group photo>

### 3. Process: ISSM

The central concern during the planning for the ISSM is finding immediate and relevant theme of the year. A survey for the theme of the year is conducted among last years participants and science museum in South Korea. When a shared interest is extracted, one is decided through a program committee made up of experts from each national science museums then speaker invitation process starts. The usual pool of speaks is made up through expert consultation, and other foreign channels. Previously invitation process proceeded session organization but recently, appropriate speakers and number of speakers are chosen according to the predetermined session to ensure clear purpose for each session. Additional programs are also planned according to the theme of the year. This year, VR exhibition, and national regional museum exhibit show reflecting this year's theme, Industry based on Science Cultural.

### 4. ISSM, NEXT

The 9<sup>th</sup> ISSM will be held on November 7~8 at National Science Museum, Republic of Korea. This symposium will be going beyond science popularization to science as a part of public's cultural palate and industries based on science as a culture.

In 2020, we are planning for a special event to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The sessions, comprised of exhibition, education, research, and administration, will be expended to 4 nights and 5 days with discussion and networking program. This will bring the symposium one step

closer to its ultimate goal: Place of exciting cooperation for all categories of science museum specialists. ISSM fellowship which started in 2018 will be expended to include more eastern Asian nations interested in the symposium to fulfill an obligation as a good member of ASPAC.

## 5. Small Tip

ISSM is in no means an event at its peak. We consider it as just started to draw a line to connect dots. And I venture to offer a small tip to who have not yet got to the stage of picking up a pen.

### Ⓐ Fix a date and promote it

ISSM has been endlessly promoting its opening day around the international science museum day, November 11<sup>th</sup> since 2017. Initially, the symposium was causing a bit of confusion as its opening day moved around from September to November. By fixing a date in a year for the symposium, participants could anticipate and plan their yearly schedule accordingly.

### Ⓑ If you want to go far, you have to go together

The National Science Museum has long history, and enough budget and staff thus we have been very conscious about involving small scale museum from theme selection and program organization step. This has created comradery and the symposium gained strong support.

### Ⓒ Believe in the strength of time

We had 5 different CEOs during past 9 years and this required us to reestablishing the significance of the symposium each time. The symposium had to withstand against negative and cynical views within the museum. The symposium went through many mistakes and controversies but today, it has been established as the science museum event where more than hundred academic papers are presented each year.