Science communications in museums

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- International Council of Museums (UNESCO)

- CIMUSET – international committee for museums of science and technology
Science communication - an example
Museum

- Collecting
- Preserving
- Presenting
- Care for heritage
- Nonprofit
- Scientific work
Communication vs. teaching

- Communication or teaching; what are the differences?

- Which one of the two are we doing?

- Which one of the two are we expected to be doing?
Communications

• Transfer of information

• Easy to do

• A large amount of information

• A passive recipient is enough - object
Teaching

- Transfer of understanding
- It is not easy to learn something
- Small amount of information
- An active (willing) participant - subject
What are we doing?

• Displaying huge numbers of exhibits (collections or hands-on)

• Giving poor explanations

• Putting too much emphasis on design
What else are we doing?

Creating museologically sound exhibitions
- well defined story,
- fair design,
- sensible mixture of museum objects and interactives,
- additional programs

• Interacting with visitors

• Making visitors participate
What are we expected to be doing?

• The most usual questions:
  – How many visitors?
  – How many programs?
  – How much income?

• Our performance is measured by means of communication not teaching
Why is it so?

• People are not aware of the difference between teaching and communication

• Our founders are interested mainly in publicity

• The lack of respect for education and knowledge in modern society
Why do we still try to teach science?

- Because we like it!!
- We believe it is necessary and beneficial for all
- We are competent to do the job
Museums and Science Centers

- Preserving – presenting
- Object - concept
- Profit – non profit
- Collection - visitors
Some matters to discuss

- Hands-on
- Interactivity
- Modern technology
- Electronic networks
Weaknesses

- Curators – scientists
- Preoccupation with collections
- Fear of publicity
Strong points

• Attractive objects

• Museology
  – Historical perspective
  – Personal approach
  – Story

• Atmosphere, local flavour
Are we getting closer?

- Most of our goals are similar
- Many differences are of a historical origin
- In future our pathways will become more convergent
Conclusion

• Museums (science centers) are ideal places to perform science communication (teaching)

• They have to learn from (and help) each other

• More concern for the quality than for the quantity
Invitation

- CIMUSET annual conference 2003
- 12\textsuperscript{th} to 18\textsuperscript{th} september 2003, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Main topics:
  - Museums and Science Centers
  - For whom science and technology museums are designed