

ASPAC Fellowship Report

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I found the experience of attending the ASPAC 2004 conference to be thought provoking and professionally enriching.

Keynote speakers looked at different and non-conventional ways enhancing and expanding science centre activity. I have included some of the areas covered that have stayed with me:

Ms Lesley Lewis, Director General & CEO of the Ontario Science Centre in Canada, talked about “working with visitors, not making exhibits for visitors”.

Dr Paul Cheung, Lead Shepherd of APEC ISTWG and Associate Professor of the University of Hong Kong, explored the “art of serendipity”.

Dr Mamoru Mohri, Director of Miraikan in Japan, looked at the importance of people in science centres including the scientists, the general public and the staff.

The concept of “minds-on” not just “hands-on” was another important point raised during the conference.

The hospitality of the Hong Kong Science Museum, led by the Director, Mr Yip, and his team was extraordinary. I was made to feel very welcome, the venue was easy to get around, the sessions ran smoothly, and the food was great.

The pre-conference workshop was very well run and gave me, as a total novice in 3-D prototyping, an overview of the processes and outcomes that can be expected from each of the current technologies available.

One of the best parts of the conference for me was the social interaction with delegates from a wide range of institutions and countries. The time allowed in the schedule to talk to people from diverse centres – some with many staff and resources, others with few staff and modest resources – was very important. It was interesting to learn that centres from a variety of cultural and economic settings are facing similar challenges. The ideas generated in informal discussions were just as useful as those in the more formal setting.

I would like to thank the ASPAC for the opportunity to attend the 2004 Conference. As part of a small science centre, I would not otherwise have been able to attend this enriching and thought provoking meeting.