CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VISITOR STUDIES GROUP CONFERENCE 2023
Open for all?: Working towards inclusive practice
18-19 MAY 2022
ISH VENUES, LONDON (and online)

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: EOD 8th February 2023

The Visitor Studies Group is a membership organisation for individuals whose role involves, uses or benefits from visitor studies/ research. We aim to champion visitor studies as a force for evidence-based decision-making to encourage and create excellent experiences for all audiences.

Our conference is a place where delegates from across the cultural sector – and beyond – can come together to connect, share and reflect on experiences, research and learning. In 2023, we are planning for an in-person conference, though there will also be a virtual catch-up offering for those who cannot join us in person.

As a speaker, this event is a great platform to share your work with professionals in the museum, gallery, arts, heritage and cultural sector. It can raise your and/or your organisation's profile and help make connections with others working in the field.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The topic of our 2023 conference is *Open for all? Working towards inclusive practice.*

Over two days, we will explore, discuss and share stories around how visitor studies can guide the sector in developing more inclusive practice and ensure the voice of all potential and existing audiences is present in our work. We also want to continue to explore our role in using evaluation to champion for change. Building on discussions in our 2022 conference, we adopt a broad definition of accessibility: that of giving 'equitable access to everyone along a continuum of ability and experience' (AAM). We consider not only issues of physical access and design but also accessibility as it relates to broader issues of equity and inclusion.

Some of the topics we hope to explore are addressed in the bullet points below. This list is by no means exhaustive, nor is it meant to be too prescriptive; we are open to your own interpretation of the conference theme.

- Best practice and tips in conducting research related to accessibility
- Myth-busting: working with audience groups with varied needs and capabilities
- Setting up advisory panels: access; families; youth
- Using evaluation as a tool to explore and advance diversity, equity and inclusion
- Conducting evaluation in unusual locations or going beyond the walls of your institution
- Supporting a sense of belonging and welcome for visitors of diverse backgrounds
- Evaluation with non-visitors or (potential) new audiences
- Balancing funder demands with organisational needs and resources
- Bringing in and amplifying community voices
- The role of evaluation in addressing issues around power in this work

We encourage you to bring fresh perspectives, with research and evaluation at their core, from both inside and outside the sector that can help us move visitor studies forward in interesting and innovative ways.

We welcome input from all those who can address the theme in a creative, collaborative and/or meaningful way to share their own experiences of using a variety of approaches and methodologies in research and evaluation both now and in the future.

SESSION TYPES

We are looking for contributions in a range of formats which can include, but are not limited to:

- discussion sessions/ provocations
- hands-on skills-based workshops/ training (should last approx. 45mins-60mins and proposed activities/ tasks must be detailed in your proposal)
- panel/ roundtable discussions
- case studies
- pre-recorded lightning talk (10 minutes)
- pre-recorded presentation/session
- remote presentation

Opportunities to share and to engage fully with speakers and delegates is actively encouraged to support and facilitate meaningful knowledge exchange. Please let us know what format best fits with your proposal; we also welcome alternative methods and formats for sessions. If you would like to propose a session but some of the speakers would not be able to travel, we are also happy to explore their presenting remotely.

On reviewing all submissions the VSG Committee may ask speakers whose sessions have a similar approach/theme to collaborate, something which has worked successfully in previous years.

Please note that VSG is a not-for-profit member organisation and unfortunately cannot offer speakers attendance at the event free-of-charge. The costs of running the conference are paid for by membership fees and conference ticket purchase. Tickets and fees cover the cost of venue hire, audio-visual support, catering, conference administration and event insurance. We try to keep the costs of tickets down so that as many people can attend the conference as possible.

We do recognise, however, that cost can be a barrier to attendance. We are committed to diversity, equality and inclusion at our conference and wish to promote a more inclusive sector. For this reason, we offer two bursaries for the conference which are designed to encourage those who may not feel able to attend to come along to the conference. They are open to speakers as well as delegates. Please indicate on your proposal application if you would like to apply for one of these bursaries.

Beyond these options, we are also happy to discuss individual cases in more detail. We are keen to welcome voices from outside the sector and encourage multiple perspectives, so please do highlight any specific requests you may have on your proposal and we will look at how we could support you.

Please complete the attached form and email to: the.visitor.studies.group@gmail.com

Deadline for proposal submission is EOD 8th February 2023.

PROPOSAL

VISITOR STUDIES GROUP CONFERENCE 2023

All submissions will be judged by the VSG Committee and you may be contacted to discuss your proposal in further detail and shape it to fit into the overall conference programme.

Conference presentations and workshop papers will be published on the VSG website after the conference. Please bear in mind that anything you present at the conference will be in the public domain, so please ensure you have the right permissions in place to present your paper. We are also happy for individuals, groups or organisations to be anonymised, either in the conference itself or in any materials to be uploaded.

If your presentation is accepted, we will contact you by the end of February 2023 to let you know. As a speaker, you will be entitled to a special early bird discounted rate until April 2023 (thereafter a speakers' rate) to attend the conference and networking opportunities. We are still finalising 2023 ticket prices.

Name:	
Organisation:	
Contact email/ telephone:	
I would like to talk to the VSG Committee about alternative funding. If this applies, please tell us a little more in your email accompanying this proposal.	
I would like to apply for the Conference Travel Bursary, which will cover the cost of a conference ticket only for two days. If this applies, please tell us why in your email accompanying this proposal.	

Please indicate in which format you would wish to participate:	
Discussion session/ provocation	
Practical workshop	
Skills based workshop/ training	
Panel/ roundtable discussion	
Case study	
Remote presentation, including brief 'lightning talk' (e.g. via Zoom or recorded video)	
Please indicate any specific technical requirements you have:	

Please provide a short bio (50-100 words) of the proposed speaker(s)

Using the following bullet points, tell us your proposal. Note that your response should be no longer than 300 words and should cover all of the points listed below:

- A title for your proposed talk (*this can be tentative if needed*)

- A short abstract of your proposal, clearly indicating how it will reflect our conference theme.

- The key learning points delegates will take away – these too should align with the conference theme.