



Visitor Studies Association

Session Proposal Guidelines

We encourage the inclusion of substantial audience discussion within sessions. We are especially looking for ways to involve participants through thought-provoking, reflective conversations related to key ideas and issues raised during your session.

This year, we are using an online submission form. Read through the guidelines below; then go to <https://forms.gle/uvyha6GSNKdXV4zt7> to submit your proposal. Please note that special formatting, such as bullets, is not transferred in the online form.

All proposals must include the following:

- 1. Session Chair:** The session chair is the principal contact person for communications between VSA and presenters and is responsible for sharing logistical information with co-presenters. Please be sure to list the individual who will serve in this organizing role in the "Session Chair" field.
- 2. Confirmed Presenters:** Presenters should represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives and come both from the museum world and outside it. Proposals with confirmed presenters will be rated more highly. **Please note: To encourage diverse perspectives, VSA has instituted a participation limit for individual presenters. Individuals may only appear on 2 session proposals total. If an individual is listed as a session chair or presenter on more than 2 proposals, none of the proposals will be considered until that individual has withdrawn his/her name from the appropriate number of proposals.** Posters do not count toward the two-session limit.
- 3. Title of your session:** 10 word maximum.
- 4. Program description:** Please provide a high-level description of your session for inclusion in the Preliminary and Final Programs (50 word maximum). This description may be edited by the Program Chairs for clarity.
- 5. Session format:** Your session should acknowledge and build upon the participants' own knowledge and experiences. They should be able to clearly connect with your material and apply it to their own situations. Most conference sessions should be designed so that participants are actively engaged rather than passively receiving information. You must indicate one preferred format from the list below for your proposal.

The session format options are: A) hosted presentation B) panel presentation, C) individual paper presentation, D) facilitated discussion. More details on each of these options are below:

A. Hosted Presentation

- A single presenter or group-led presentation detailing or examining a specific methodology, instrument, or process. Generally, this will educate attendees on integrating similar steps into their work.
- Maximum of 4 presenters, including session chair
- 60-minute recommended session length

While this may include traditional presentations, we encourage presenters to consider alternative techniques that incorporate greater audience engagement, discussion, and interaction on the topic. Presenters should reserve sufficient time for audience discussion and Q&A within the session. Presenters should describe the format in the “Session Plan” section.

B. Panel Presentation:

- A moderated discussion that serves as an opportunity for multiple presenters to examine a specific issue, topic, or theme from a variety of perspectives
- Maximum of 4 presenters, including session chair
- 60-minute recommended session length

We encourage presenters to consider alternative techniques that incorporate greater audience engagement, discussion, and interaction on the topic. Presenters should reserve sufficient time for audience discussion and Q&A within the session. Presenters should describe the format in the “Session Plan” section.

C. Individual Paper Presentation:

- An opportunity to present on a single topic, project, or study
- Individual presenter or 2 presenters from the same institution or project team
- 30-minute recommended session length

Generally, this will include a presentation of completed, or mostly completed work, including findings, lessons learned, and next steps. Presenters will be responsible for facilitating audience discussion and should reserve sufficient time for Q&A within the session. Presenters do not need to complete the “Session Plan” portion of the proposal.

D. Facilitated Discussion:

- Informal group discussion with participants around key topic or area of interest in the field, led by single presenter or group
- Maximum of 3 presenters, including session chair
- May include a brief introductory presentation to set up the topic to be discussed, but most of the session should be devoted to dialogue among attendees
- 45-minute recommended session length

Presenters should describe how they will frame the topic, facilitate discussion, and wrap up the conversation in the “Session Plan” section. In this plan, presenters should also explain how they will adapt their discussion for varying audience sizes (e.g., small break out groups, pair and share, digital polls, chat functionality, etc.).

Note: Poster presentations will be invited through a separate solicitation in Late-March, 2022.

6. Length of Session: As part of the virtual conference, VSA wants to offer as much flexibility as possible to presenters. Please use the recommended session times in each session format description as a guideline for selecting the length of the session below.

- 30 minutes
- 45 minutes
- 60 minutes

Program Chairs may recommend changes to session length if the selected time does not seem to align with the session plan.

7. Intended Audience: Indicate via checkboxes which audience(s) will benefit most from this session. Consider level of material, job focus, etc. You may make up to three selections.

- Experienced evaluators and researchers
- Novice evaluators and researchers
- Emerging museum professionals
- Visitor-facing practitioners (e.g., educators, visitor experience staff, etc.)
- Experience designers (e.g., exhibit designers, program developers, etc.)
- Museum administrators
- Another audience (please describe)

8. Learning Outcomes: What will participants know or be able to do because of attending your session? You should have two or three learning outcomes, each a separate thought. **At least one** should relate to VSA's learning competencies, as described here:

<http://www.visitorstudies.org/competency-list>

9. Proposal Narrative: Provide a summary of the content of your presentation. Please include how your session relates to this year's theme.

Word Limit (excluding references):

- 300 words for an Individual Paper or Facilitated Discussion.
- They should not exceed 750 words for Hosted Presentation or Panel Presentation.

Please observe these word limits out of respect to our volunteer reviewers.

10. Session Plan (for Hosted Presentation, Panel Presentation, and Facilitated Discussion Formats): Describe what will happen during your session. Be sure to include your strategies for audience involvement and interaction, as well as a breakdown of how you intend to use the time allotted. Detail any plans to incorporate online resources and other technologies, as well as how you expect attendees to participate.

Any specific needs or requests should be emailed to visitorstudies@visitorstudies.org

VSA may choose to include your session in a virtual opportunity post conference. Please let VSA know if you are willing to record or live present your session at a virtual opportunity after the conference.