

Review of the Summer Science Exhibition 2010

The 2010 Summer Science Exhibition took place from 25 June – 4 July and included 26 competitively selected exhibits of cutting edge research, exhibited by over 850 scientists. In addition the Exhibition incorporated *Pterosaurs: Dragons of the air* - two displays from University of Portsmouth and *A winning partnership: science in schools* - a rotating exhibit organised by the Education section featuring 4 partnership grants projects from 3 secondary schools and 1 primary school in collaboration with their partner scientists.

Holding an elongated Exhibition at Southbank Centre as part of the Society's anniversary celebrations enabled the Summer Science Exhibition to reach a dramatically increased audience compared to the 2009 Exhibition.

Audience segment	2010	2009*
General public audience	Estimated 46,024	2992
Registered school groups	1932 students~ 240 teachers	856 students~ 112 teachers
Private VIP events	Approx 1750	1378 (Soirées)
Total	Approx 49,946	5522

*In 2009 the Exhibition was opened to the public from Tuesday 30 June – Saturday 4 July, including one evening opening until 9pm.

~In 2010 school groups were registered to attend over 5 days. In 2009 schools were registered over 4 days.

Analysis of public visitors

Approximately 6,000 visitors attended the exhibition per weekend day and approximately 4,000 per week day. An interview survey, which enabled in depth feedback from the event, was carried out with 97 visitors of whom 86 were not from registered school groups, giving an indication of audience profile and how the exhibition was received.

- 58% of respondents were aged under 44, 16% were aged over 65
- Respondents were evenly split between males (50%) and females (50%)
- 26% of visitors had no formal qualification in science, technology, engineering or maths, 38% of respondents had a degree or post-graduate qualification in a STEM subject, and 19% of respondents had a GCSE, O-level or equivalent
- 70% of respondents were first time visitors to the Summer Science Exhibition

Public visitors responses to the exhibition were very positive:

- 97% of respondents rated their overall experience of the Summer Science Exhibition as Enjoyable or Very Enjoyable
- 60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were now more interested in science
- Visitors were asked what they like best about this year's Summer Science Exhibition. The aspects respondents cited most frequently were:
 - friendly and knowledgeable people
 - the way it makes science accessible and engaging
 - amount and variety of information
 - educational aspects
- The reason visitors gave most frequently for what they liked about particular stands were:

- accessible – learnt something new
- staff were engaging/interactive elements/presentation of stand
- fun/interesting
- have an interest in a similar field (through work, studies or hobby)

Analysis of school visitors (students and teachers)

1932 students attended the 2010 Exhibition, accompanied by 240 teachers. Of these students 762 (39%) were aged 14 – 16 and 1170 (61%) were aged 16 – 18. 646 students completed the post event questionnaire. 47 teachers completed and returned the teacher questionnaire giving us feedback from 46% of the schools attending.

- The school audience was evenly split between male and female students (47% and 53% respectively).
- The majority of schools attending were from the London and South East region.

Students' responses to the exhibition were positive:

- 46% of KS4 students and 56% of KS5 students felt that the Exhibition had made them more interested in a career in science.
- 61% of KS4 students and 72% of KS5 students said that the Exhibition has made them want to find out more about science.

Students were asked which exhibit they enjoyed the most and why they enjoyed it. The reasons given for choosing particular exhibits as most enjoyable include:

- Exhibitor interaction. Good communication, enthusiasm, engaging, understandable, friendly, inspirational
- Exhibit display. Varied way of presenting the information, not too over-complicated
- Hands on activities & interactive demonstrations.
- Relevance. Linked to what they wanted to study/ already studied, applied topic to their own interests

The interaction with the exhibitors was the reason stated most often as to why the exhibit was enjoyable.

Convocation

The Convocation of the Fellowship, held on the afternoon of 23 June, was attended by approximately 1750 guests and the Royal Society's patron HRH Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Duke of Edinburgh, HRH Prince William, HRH Princess Royal and HRH Duke of Kent.

Promotion and media coverage

The Exhibition was advertised in *Guardian Guide*, *New Scientist*, *Financial Times Life & Arts*, *Observer Review* and *TimeOut*. 200 posters were also displayed throughout the London Underground network. In addition, the Exhibition was promoted through a comprehensive post and email campaign to Royal Society and Southbank Centre contacts and listed on a large number of events listings in print and on the web.

The Exhibition achieved excellent media coverage throughout the week with news pieces appearing in the national broadsheets, including The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Financial Times and The Independent.

The press release issued on the opening day of the Summer Science Exhibition received good pick up appearing in The Metro, The Daily Telegraph The Financial Times and The Times. The Summer Science Exhibition received coverage on BBC Newsnight, Channel 5 Gadget Show, Sky News and BBC Radio 4 Material World and Today programme and the Guardian podcast was recorded at the Summer Science Exhibition.

Festival of Science + Arts website seefurtherfestival.org

- The festival website received 89,399 visits from 22 March to 31 August 2010, with 64,334 being unique visitors.
- The exhibition pages on the website received 94,823 pageviews
- On average, visitors to the site viewed over 3 pages and spent an average of 3 minutes on the site
- The majority of the visits came from the UK. There were also visitors from 137 other countries, particularly from USA, Germany, Australia, Netherlands, Canada, France, Ireland, Italy and Russia