

Member Feedback from the Pittsburgh Meeting

As part of the conference packet for the Pittsburgh meeting, we included an evaluation form so participants could tell us what they thought of the meeting and make suggestions to improve future conferences. We received 193 forms which translates into a response rate of 51%--a great rate for any survey. Included below are a number of the comments and we will be discussing how to respond to as many of these as we can at future SHOT meetings.

In what ways could the conference be improved?

More time between the call-for-papers and final submission date for papers
Better information about using local transit system
A guide to restaurants with street addresses might be useful
More panels, more interdisciplinary approaches, especially on Sunday
Online registration
Keep parallel panels or tours simultaneous with panels at a different venue
At first, the big binder seemed like overkill but nice to pull out a few loose leaves rather than run around with a booklet
Would like a printed program booklet as in times past
Go back to portable conference programs
Have affordable wine for sale at the banquet
Re the hotel rate, we were not allowed to book doubles at the conference rate
Bring back the free bar in the hospitality suite and biscuits/pastries with the coffee breaks

What kinds of sessions would you like to see included at future conferences?

How members of other disciplines can engage with History of Technology
New media histories, historic work by non-historians (STS, cultural studies, engineering community studies, American studies, gender studies etc)
Open up to more non-academic themes or subjects in public history
More theoretical and conceptual panels
It was striking that the Web 2.0 session had no live internet access because of the cost. I suggest that you consider using some of the international auction proceeds to fund such things next year for sessions with such special needs
Make clear distinction in program between exhibit or report-type presentation.
Analytical/critical papers, perhaps poster sessions
Interaction with science/society (not necessarily STS)
Particularly liked the cross-disciplinarity of some sessions, like art and technology
Already a huge spectrum from which to choose
Session at offbeat locations - why didn't we use the Heinz History Center more?
Fewer business history panels - more on big topics or pre-modern topics
Five papers in one session was too many
Keep sessions to a maximum of three papers
More theoretical approaches
Production/manufacturing

General comments

Well done, one of the best conferences I've ever been to

When possible, it would be nice to have conference sessions on the same floor because it makes meeting other participants easier

Great job overall! Lots of energy for new ideas, that's great - love the new regime!

One-page Conference overview was good - with all main SHOT sessions Fri and Sat

Brilliant conference! Lovely atmosphere. Thanks so much. Love the Wetland bag – super eco green, not boring black!

DaVinci session frees up Thursday plenary for less academically traditional presentations. SHOT needs to expand outreach to audiences in public history, especially educational community

Try a university venue rather than an overpriced hotel, they could use the PR and we pay less

No chance for lunch if attending lunchtime workshops/meetings

Dacey Internet, expensive business center, food not close enough

Edelstein session was a good addition

I thought the organization was both seamless and faultless. There were many truly excellent Features

Hotel too dear - downtown dead in the evening after 8 pm - split across two floors

Daily Widget was great - would be nice to have a pocket-size program

Author meets critics Edelstein session was a great start. Since SHOT doesn't do this much though, people need more coaching: author should start with 5-10 minute synopsis, critics should speak for 10-15 min each and be told to include discussion points that even those who didn't read book can pick up on, critics should be encouraged to challenge - not merely praise – the author. Next time, put the book title in the program to further lure people

I liked many of the changes introduced this year and encourage SHOT to continue tinkering with the formula

Recycling meeting materials is a great idea

Increase font size on name tags