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K04 - Engaging with the Public in Planetariums

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It is now 101 years since planetariums became key tools in entertaining and educating people of all ages about the wonderful sights of the night sky.

Planetariums are now in use in very many countries; they inspire people of all ages to show an interest in not only astronomy, but science in general. The International Planetarium Society (IPS), the world's major professional planetarium organisation, has members from around 50 countries and holds a major conference every two years to discuss techniques and equipment. The speaker will discuss the history of planetariums, including the technology used. This has been changing, the significant difference being the use of digital projection techniques. However, it is the staff in planetariums that are the key to engaging with the public: a planetarium is not the same as a movie theatre, and offers a quite different experience. In the most successful planetariums, the enthusiasm of professional staff is infectious.

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