

## Report conference survey 2011

This report is based on 97 surveys received after the 2011 SD conference in Washington. The responses have been gathered via SurveyMonkey.

All closed format survey items could be answered on a scale from 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive), with NO indicating 'no opinion'. Items were formulated as follows: 'When it comes to conference content, my evaluation is ...' and covered all subjects listed in the table below. Each closed format item was followed by an open question on additional comments. Finally, the survey covered professional background and fields of interest. Overall scores are as follows.

	Most frequent answer	Min	Max
1. Content	6	1	7
2. Services	6	2	7
3. Location	6	2	7
4. Social activities	6	1	7
5. Value for money	6	1	7
6. Conference fee	6	1	7
7. Hotel sleeping accommodation	6	1	7

Overall, the conclusion is that all elements are valued highly. Open comments that stand out (see below) are on the need to be more inclusive of specific target audiences, such as consultants and decision makers.

### Open comments

1. Conference content
  - The Plenary presentations were outstanding!
  - Standards are (still) too low
  - An excellent mix of content.

- Very strong content from all of the presenters. I would love to see even more of the industry participants give talks outside of the workshop forums - for example, talks on their methodological approaches, etc.
- Too corporate
- The majority of the morning plenaries were particularly bad this year.
- Surprisingly in-ward looking of SD analysts, and low-quality of papers and presentations
- At least 25 % of the plenaries should be reserved for innovative work. This year, a large share of the plenaries were dedicated to traditional ("old school") SD and presented by system dynamicists at the end of their careers.
- Many of the parallel sessions were too far from being finished or were of low quality

## 2. Services

- Had to look for the PhD colloquium on Sunday morning, no info from the hotel, and registration started at lunch
- There were always staff around to help.
- I thought the SDS staff did a fantastic, thorough job of event planning and execution. I felt that the Hyatt did a sufficient job - I would have appreciated seeing coffee left out for consumption after the breaks, water refilled more frequently, etc. I also would have liked to have seen Hyatt turn on the air circulation more fully.
- Poor hotel air conditioning
- I particularly liked that WiFi was included in the hotel booking.
- Very well done.
- Modeling assistance workshops is great, but I would hold them, if possible, when no other sessions occur.
- could coffee/tea be available throughout?

## 3. Location

- The hotel layout was difficult to navigate and wifi access was very limited.
- But the following location (St. Gallen) complicates future assistance
- The hotel was good and the conference rooms were OK. However, the walls of the rooms were so thin it gave noise nuisance. Moreover, the simultaneous presence of other conferences made our conference less 'intimate'.
- A/C Issues - could have been cooler
- DC is a terrible swamp, but the conference facilities were fine.
- I did not stay at the Hotel, however the customer service was excellent. However I would have preferred to have internet access, if not in the meeting rooms, at least in the public areas.
- I prefer Boston and a fixed location in Europe
- Good location; far enough from DC to avoid crowds yet accessible by public transport.
- Washington DC is a great location to have a conference. I know that many of the local industry sponsors enjoyed having the conference so close to their center of their operations.
- I would like to see more int'l locales...
- I really didn't like the venue. I thought it was impersonal, the food was bad and expensive, and it was very isolated.... I would prefer either a natural setting, e.g. Banff, Alberta, or a more dynamic city center location. I think this could energize relationships to form better. It felt generically corporate and I don't think we are a very corporate bunch of people... I do note that it was wonderful to meet the sponsors in their home city and the advent of the debt talks added atmosphere incidently.
- Dec is nice--but not in the summer!

- The site was somewhat remote from Washington's tourist sites.
- The center of Washington would have been much nicer. I do not argue for a holiday destination, but at least an attractive location. Luckily I had 3 days to enjoy Washington afterwards.
- Since I live in the area :)

#### 4. Social activities

- Good with some time to chat with colleagues
- I did not participate in the social activities, but heard great reports from attendees.
- I thought they were ok but could have been better publicised and that a different venue could have helped immensely with this.
- Aside from the banquet, what social activities? The conference was so tightly packed with presentations. And the evening poster session was so mobbed & packed in with barely room to breathe....
- I liked the buffet poster sessions, but did not go to the banquet (I had family in the area that I visited).
- I can think of more activities linking social and work.
- I think it would have been nice to have a happy hour set up each evening instead of just the night of the banquet.
- Food was not all that great -especially in the banquet

#### 5. Value for money

- Yes in general it is value for my money. The conference dinner was however too expensive for the quality delivered.
- Comparable with (or slightly cheaper than) other similar conferences.
- Lots of content and events justified the price.
- I received great exposure of the state of the System Dynamics field, and was able to network with many other practitioners. I very much enjoyed the workshops on Thursday - where else can you get mini-workshops on SD software like this?
- Priced for corporate expense accounts; not real people
- Disappointed with conference, a waste of time

#### 6. Fee

- I've been participate to other international conference with same amount of fee and it very generous in terms of what the conference provide. I perceived this SD conference 2011 give less value.
- Very reasonable
- The fee is entirely reasonable.
- too expensive
- To reach more people SD needs real people prices
- I think it still is very expensive for students
- But compared to other conferences it is certainly good value for money.
- Free admission with corporate sponsorship
- The registration is too expensive, specially for students.

## 7. Hotel

- Rooms are spacious and the provision of wireless internet was excellent. The walls of the rooms are too thin, this gives noise nuisance.
- Too expensive with not good services
- Hotel was fine, but no fridge made self-catering very difficult.
- did not stay at hotel
- I did not sleep in the conference hotel, but in the L' Enfant Plaza hotel.
- Too expensive for small businesses
- I did not stay at the Hyatt.
- Meals and internet are very expensive
- I didn't like the hotel much, sorry.
- Hotel was good.
- As a local resident, this didn't really apply to me.
- did not stay at hotel
- Stayed at another hotel

## 8. Specific comments, compliments, and complaints

- The facilities were somewhat limiting, but the organization and staff were outstanding.
- The organization was excellent and the atmosphere was very good. Please give also internet access in the conference rooms.
- I enjoyed the conference and meeting the system dynamics community for the first time; and I learned so much.
- Good job, very smooth. Fireside chat with Jay Forrester was definitely the highlight.
- As I have commented in previous feedbacks since I began attending these SDS Conferences once again, this remains one of the very best. I believe this is due in no small measure to the nique combination of efficiency and warmth with which Roberta carries out her responsibilities - and much more than that - as Executive Director.
- Conference continues to be too centered on the usual SD folks. Where are the policy makers and decision makers.
- In general the organization and content of the conference was fine. However, I am sorry to say, I am very, very disappointed about the conference dinner. First, I found it strange that you had to pay for your drinks (but the waiters were not able to give you a receipt). Second, the quality of the food was extremely poor. Third, I was astonished that just after the main course was served we were already asked if we wanted to have coffee. When I would have been in a normal restaurant I would have refused to pay the bill. I have stayed in the US quite some time before and after the conference and this was the worst meal I have had during my stay. To conclude, again sorry to say, total no value for money.
- Although the conference content was excellent as usual I thought that most of the splinter sessions that I attended were poorly managed. In many instances speakers had obviously not timed their presentations at all to fit within the time constraints and consequently many presenters hurried through or skipped many of their last slides in order to fit within the required time frame. There were many examples of this and a couple of extreme examples. The resources invested in a full room of people listening to a presentation are enormous and I think that the speakers should have had more respect for this. Moreover, this situation put unnecessary pressure on those speakers who had prepared well. Timekeepers in these instances also did not enforce the time restrictions well and many talks were allowed to run well over time. I also attended talks where presenters loaded their presentations during their allocated presentation time rather than prior to the session. Overall these issues gave the impression of poor and unprofessional session planning.

- A well-organized conference which offered lots of interesting content for those familiar with SD and training for those interested in learning more about SD. Well done!
- I am not a modeler, but was able to gain a great deal from the sessions...very good presenters and topics...really enjoyed it.
- I know that there is a wide range of conference participants, which makes perfection difficult. It is extremely important, however, that the society continues to hold an annual conference for the purpose of sharing work and maintaining relationships within this
- A great conference. I look forward to future ones!
- Lack of cell and wireless service on the bottom level was both good and bad. It avoided distractions, but left me disconnected for large parts of the day which is hard this day and age.
- The diet Atkins bars provided during breaks were horrendous. The conference location was also not located near places where food could be purchased so we were limited to the hotel.
- I had such a wonderful time at this conference! What a wonderful opportunity to meet so many amazing and inspiring individuals.
- SD conference provided a friendly inviting atmosphere and I could talk to veterans of the field without any hindrance.
- As usual, I found the conference interesting, and enjoyed the variety of topics addressed. I appreciate the fact that most of the papers I listened to were given in understandable English, without a lot of SD or mathematical jargon.
- SD is at a turning point: is it going to be merely a process for the corporate rich or something of genuine social use; is it to maximize profits or quality of life; is it to make corporate organizations more effective or make society more effective; will it continue to contribute to social inequity or help level the playing field. Even lawyers do pro bono work, but SD seems to think that is beneath them.
- I think that all those involved truly made an effort to make it a very good conference
- It was great to have Tom Fiddaman at the conference. He was quite helpful.
- i think that the conference rooms were ok but the location of the hotel and the quality of refreshments and food was very disappointing.
- A good all around experience. Would be nice if it were a bit less expensive, but...Hyatt's do a good job and are predictable in my experience. Well done!
- I am very disappointed with SDS conference, the in-ward looking of SD analysts (academia, students, and consultants), and the false belief that SD is the solution to everything. It is no wonder why SD after decades of existence still stay out of the main stream of analytical tools. Has anyone heard an econometrics specialist claim that econometrics is the solution to all?
- As a job-seeker, the red ribbons on employer's name tags was a brilliant addition to the conference!
- I think the conference is very concentrated in the same people. I didn't like the idea that the same people were awarding one to each other. It does not look nice and looks to me very inbreeding. And also my work was misplaced in the wrong parallel session. My field is security and conflict and they placed me in employment, so I didn't have the feedback that I was expecting. I enjoy so much the Jay Forrester's interview.
- Another great one - thank you to all who work so hard to make it happen.
- Home office: great job! As always.
- I particularly enjoyed the conversations about how SD as an analytical methodology fits into a consulting paradigm.
- This was my first SDS conference and I was very disappointed. I am not surprised that SD has failed to become mainstream analytical methodology, since I observed the highest level of analytical arrogance in my career, as many people expressed the opinion

- that SD is the only analytical tool required in one's toolbox. With this level of arrogance, it is no surprise that non-SD advocates turn away from the capability.
- Overall the conference was excellent. My only comment is that I was a bit confused about the Phd sessions on Sunday. I wondered if I had misunderstood how to sign up before the conference. My name was not on the signup list, with no lunch coupon (the later a mute point since I brought my lunch). In the future I will look at for that information in the conference announcement information. I may have missed this in the registration form.
  - First time attendee - enjoyed it enough to join the Society as a result. Looking forward to many more!
  - I just wish, that the following conferences can keep up with the warm and welcoming atmosphere of this conference. I heard some complaints that there was bad time management in some parallel sessions, while I have not experience it myself. Congratulation for this insightful, and highly inspiring, and motivating conference. The Boing and Lane's talk were just great. I hope that the formulated visions and guidance for the further development of the field are becoming reality. Further on I am asking myself if mathematically formulated feedback model paper presentation is becoming the new guiding standard? I would have rejected conference paper that seemed to mathematical for the audience - while I perceived the presentation of the same paper well understandable, since it was presented with CLD and not maths. There is some ambiguity in the field
  - I think the consultants survey hurt our society. That we were willing to share the data, as scarce and poor as it was, says something positive, but people in my organization who were firsst time at the conference got a negative impression from this presentation, as well as the paucity of consulting presentations that showed business improvement.
  - Great conference, great job. Congratulations.
  - Thank you for the nice time and new perspectives given!
  - We should form a consultant SIG

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Etiënne Rouwette, VP Member services