

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Space Culture: Innovative Approaches for Public Engagement in Space (8)

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SPACEUP UNCONFERENCES: A 21ST CENTURY GLOBAL APPROACH TO SPACE OUTREACH

**Abstract**

SpaceUp is a novel approach to outreach, a self-organized event without a strict roadmap, an open space to encourage initiative and creativity. At a SpaceUp "unconference", participants decide the topics, schedule, and structure of the event. It brings together scientists, engineers, students, teachers, and artists to showcase their ideas and projects, encouraging them to work together on the future of space exploration. SpaceUp is a result of the 21st-century emphasis on participatory culture, where "fandom" is expressed as involvement and direct support, and belief that small groups can be as capable as large organizations. SpaceUp has found great continuing success around the world, emerging from space communities as diverse as America, Europe, and India.

The first SpaceUp – held in 2010 in San Diego – grew out of the populist, participatory "maker" culture of California's technology community over the last decade. SpaceUp follows the Open Space format of BarCamp and other technology unconferences; at these successful gatherings, participants create the program – the session grid – spontaneously on site. Every participant is welcome to give a presentation or lead a discussion. SpaceUp brought the same setting to the space community.

SpaceUp's creators encouraged other cities to duplicate the event: interested organizers do not need to request permission to use the format, logo, or name as long as the event is about space and remains an unconference. The core team advises organizers while leaving it to each local organizing team to customize the unconference to suit their local community. This gives the local teams organizational autonomy, freedom to build their event in accordance with the space culture and creativity surrounding them. With each SpaceUp the concept is extended and evolves, adapting to new kinds of talks and advances in social media. In developing spacefaring countries, for example, special needs and tactics for

outreach were observed for SpaceUp.

SpaceUp found overwhelming success and eventually spread enthusiasm in Europe in 2012, including SpaceUp Stuttgart where emphasis was laid on space program presentations and student projects at the University of Stuttgart. SpaceUp continued its journey further East with SpaceUp India, held in Bangalore. Here, university space projects were highlighted with a special focus on education and outreach for an emerging space country. The unconference continues to expand around the world, including Saudi Arabia, the Caribbean, and New Zealand, plus more cities in Europe, India, and the Americas, changing the mechanics of outreach in space.