

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

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EDUCATING THE PUBLIC AND INSPIRING CHILDREN BY HIGHLIGHTING THE FUTURE OF  
SPACEFLIGHT FOR CITIZEN SPACE TRAVELLERS

**Abstract**

**Purpose:** A study of space education outreach initiatives by museums, institutions and the private sector designed specifically to educate and inspire our children to engage in the NewSpace Economy.

**Methodology:** A meta-study of space education and outreach programs in the U.S., and interviews with key players to ask the question, “How can the new commercial spaceflight opportunities inspire our children’s dreams of space?”

**Results:** Outreach and space education initiatives abound, but those emphasizing future spaceflight are limited in scope due to the cessation of the Shuttle program. The immediate future of spaceflight in America focuses primarily on unmanned interplanetary exploration, ISS launches on Russian rockets, and as-yet-to-be-flown launchers.

Private companies are starting to present opportunities for members of the general public to fly into space. Yet, startups are not able to offer very much in the way of space education and public outreach. Most museums do not focus on the NewSpace Initiatives. One does: Seattle’s Museum of Flight. The “Charles Simonyi Gallery” will show visiting families the future of spaceflight for citizen space travellers.

The NewSpace economy will engage many people in spaceflight. Currently, we rely on NASA to provide scant opportunities for a select few professional astronauts to go into space. Museums provide an opportunity to educate the public about the new ways to dream about going into space, and it’s not just about science any more. The arts, culture, commerce, and even sports will be given new opportunities to flourish as well.

**Conclusions:** Space education and outreach can be expanded to include the excitement of opportunities provided by the NewSpace economy, and our children’s space dreams don’t have to die with the end of Shuttle flights. The possibilities continue to expand for space travel, research, and even cultural arts. Our planet is on the threshold of a new era in spaceflight, and our children can be inspired once again.