

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth - Space Outreach to the General Public (6)

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SCIENCE MUSEUM, ITS ROLES AND MEANING IN KOREAN SPACE CULTURE

Abstract

In April 2014, the largest aerospace museum in Asia will open in Jeju Island in Korea. The visitor count of the Naro Space Center Space Science Museum operated by Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) was over a million in January 2014. The general public in South Korea is growing more interested in space. To increase public interest about space at this time, the role and meaning of the Science Museum within the Korean space culture should be studied. The public has been an important part of Korean space development since 2005. With two important projects, the first Korean astronaut project and the Korean Space Launch Vehicle-1, the Korean government and KARI actively performed public promotion, and the public responded to them enthusiastically and space culture started to appear in Korea. The situation within which science and space museums exists is the base of this movement. There are five national science museums, one space museum operated by KARI, three private aerospace museum and activity centers in Korea. These museums have developed with growing interest in space among the Korea population. In this paper, the specific roles and effects of these museums in raising public awareness of space and space culture in Korea will be analyzed, and the future roles and meanings will be proposed. The research was performed by archive analysis, interviews of curators of science museums, and surveys. Although the science museums have not played significant role in space culture, they are places that people met science and technology. They began to change their roles from passive place providers to active promoters of space culture as core centers of public education. The museums have developed themselves as the space culture in Korea has expanded and the new aerospace museum in Jeju Island will be a new trigger to make museums more important within space culture.