

Evaluation of PCST 2016: Summary Report September 2016

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Summary

More than half of the registered delegates (318) to the April 2016 PCST Conference in Istanbul Turkey responded to an online survey seeking their feedback about the conference.

Participants were fairly evenly split between those who practice science communication and those who research it.

Attendance was only 63% of the previous PCST conference in Brazil and 47% of the 2012 PCST conference in Florence. This was most likely due to the political instability of Turkey and some academic institutions restricting their staff from travel to Turkey. Fewer participants (compared to previous recent PCST conferences) were involved in teaching or training science communicators. Again, this is likely due to those people being restricted from attending by their institutions.

Despite the lower numbers, or perhaps because it was a smaller conference, the majority of survey respondents noted networking, meeting people and interacting with colleagues as being conference highlights. They also enjoyed the discussions, dialogue and feeling of community.

The diverse and global nature of participants and topics, and the mix of practitioners and theoreticians were noted as some of the best things about the conference and likely indicate a growing maturity and depth of thought amongst the PCST community. Twenty percent of participants had attended at least three other PCST conferences, further supporting notions of a developing collegiality amongst PCST participants.

As with past PCST conferences, the main motivations for people attending the conference were to present a paper (46%) and to network (28%).

Participants were most satisfied with the plenary organisation (80%), the welcome reception (77%), the accommodation (76%), the plenary content (74%), the parallel session and panel session content (both 73%) and the parallel session organisation (72%).

While the majority of respondents were satisfied with most elements of the conference, there were suggestions for improvement:

1. Reduce the number of parallel sessions to avoid low audience numbers and conflicts in what people can attend. Suggestions for achieving this were to extend the time of the conference, choose papers more selectively, and increase the number of panel sessions.
2. Increase time for discussion in sessions by including more panel discussions and less one-way presentations in both plenary and parallel sessions.
3. Increase opportunities for networking by including sessions like 'meet the experts' and having a special session for first time participants.
4. Provide clearer guidelines for poster presentations and link oral presentations with physical posters.
5. Communicate about the program more clearly before and during the conference, including making any changes to the program clear.
6. Make sure the Internet is functioning well, livestream plenary sessions and make better use of social media, especially in parallel sessions.

7. Link social events to local culture and ensure there are opportunities for people to cost-effectively network with each other at these events.

Less than one third of survey respondents said they would definitely attend the next conference in Dunedin, New Zealand. This was similar to the previous two PCST conferences, but significantly less than the 50% of New Delhi PCST conference participants who indicated that they would attend the Florence conference.

Given the distance to travel to New Zealand from most countries, the challenge will be to promote an attractive program and a cost-effective conference to interested but uncommitted members of the PCST community.

Introduction

To conduct the evaluation of PCST 2016, held in Istanbul, Turkey, 26–28 April 2016, an email was sent 28 May to the 318 participants who registered for the conference. This invitation included participants who registered but who did not attend the conference. The email referred recipients to an online survey of ten questions. The survey questions are included in Appendix A. Two follow up reminders were sent to participants and the survey was also promoted through the PCST Network’s Facebook page and through Twitter.

By the closing date on 12 June, a total of 163 responses were received. This represented a response rate of 51%. Table 1 provides a comparison for survey response rates by participants over the last four PCST conferences.

PCST Conference	Registered participants	Survey respondents	% Response rate
PCST 2010	530	220	44
PCST 2012	670	294	44
PCST 2014	507	159	31
PCST 2016	318	163	51

Table 1: Survey responses rates for past four PCST conferences

The responses to each question by survey participants registered for PCST 2016 are summarised below and compared to data from the previous three PCST conferences (held in India, Italy and Brazil).

Q1: What is your main connection with science communication?

Figure 1 shows the PCST 2016 survey respondents’ main connection with science communication.

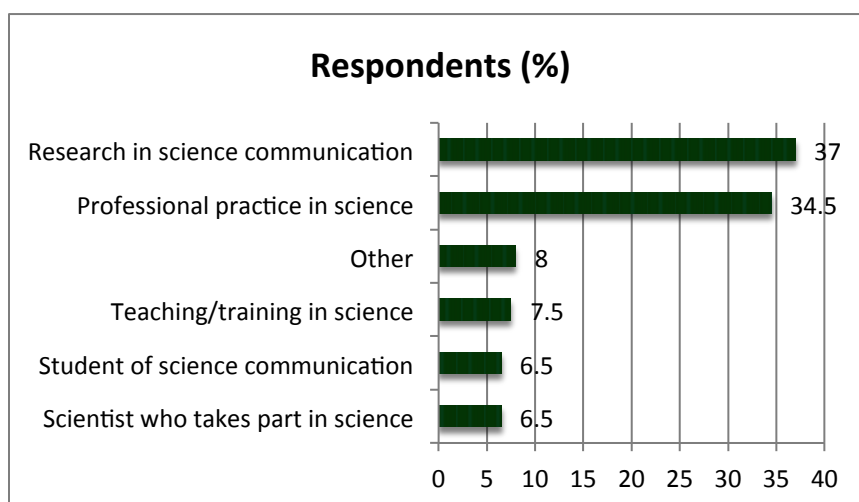


Figure 1: PCST 2016 survey respondents’ main connection with science communication

Table 2 summarises and compares responses (in percentages) from participants for the past four PCST conferences.

Main connection	PCST 2010 (%)	PCST 2012 (%)	PCST 2014 (%)	PCST 2016 (%)
Professional practice in science communication	22	35	33	34.5
Research in science communication	23	32	26	37
Teaching/training in science communication	21	9	16	7.5
Scientist who takes part in science communication	NA	8.5	NA	6.5
Student of science communication	NA	8.5	NA	6.5
Other	17	7	NA	8
TOTAL	83	100	75	100

Table 2: Participants' main connection with science communication for last four PCST conferences

The proportion of participants engaged in professional practice has remained steady for the last three PCST conferences. PCST 2016 saw an increase in participants engaged in science communication research. Participants engaged in teaching and/or training in science communication has varied over the past four conferences.

Thirteen participants provided additional information about their reasons for attending. Ten open-ended responses focused on participants being involved in science communication research, teaching and practice rather than just one area. Two participants indicated that they were professional science communicators who also enrolled in graduate education in science communication. One final participant indicated that they were a communicator for a research organisation.

Q2: Did you register for participation but fail to attend?

Twenty-nine of the 163 respondents answered 'yes' to this question (18%). Twenty-six participants who did not attend the conference provided reasons for their lack of attendance:

1. political situation in Turkey/security concerns/travel advisories (n = 12)
2. lack of funding (n = 6)
3. illness (n = 3)
4. unclear communication with organisers about paper acceptance (2)
5. personal/family reasons (n = 2)
6. other work commitments (n = 1)

One participant indicated that the organisers did not address security concerns in a timely fashion. Another participant indicated that the conference organisers communicated their paper was accepted but that the paper was deleted from the conference website in the last week before the conference.

Q3: What was your main motive for coming to PCST 2016?

129 out of 163 PCST 2016 participants (79%) answered this question. Figure 2 shows the main motives selected by these survey respondents for attending PCST 2016.

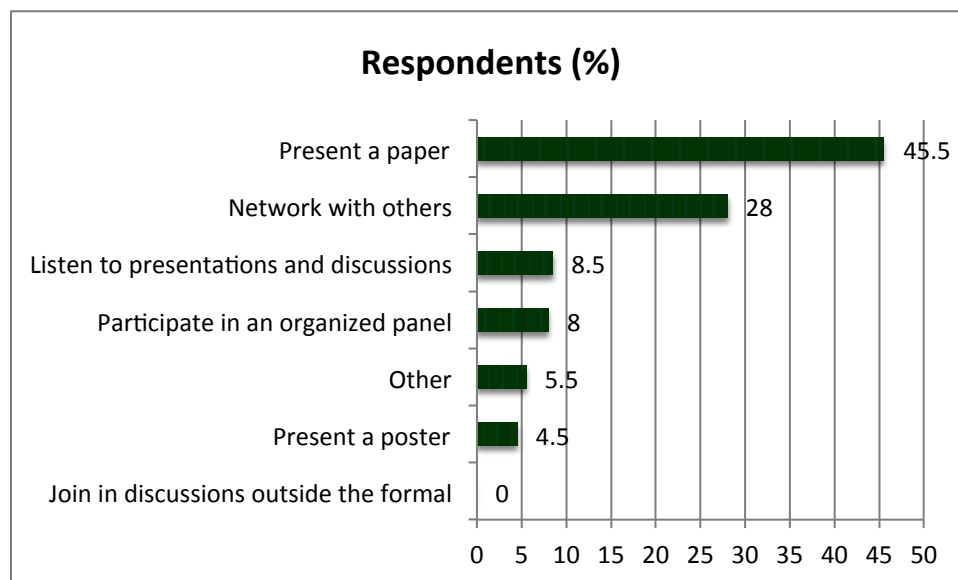


Figure 2: PCST 2016 survey respondents main motive for coming to PCST 2016

Table 3 provides a comparison for participants' motivations for attending for the past four PCST conferences.

Main motive for coming to PCST	PCST 2010 (%)	PCST 2012 (%)	PCST 2014 (%)	PCST 2016 (%)
Present a paper	41	34.5	32	45.5
Network with others	33	19.5	30	28
Participate in an organised panel	NA	14.5	19	8
Listen to presentations and discussions	16	19.5	NA	8.5
Present a poster	NA	7.5	NA	4.5
Join in discussions outside the formal sessions	NA	1	NA	0
Other	6	3.5	NA	5.5
TOTAL	96	100	81	100

Table 3: A comparison of PCST participants' main motives for attending PCST conferences

Of the five participants who provided additional information on motives to attend, four noted that they were coming for more than one reason e.g. to present a paper and a poster or "all of the above. One additional participant indicated that they also ran a workshop session. The theme of "networking" featured in the responses of three of these participants.

Significantly more conference registrants came to PCST2016 to present a paper than compared to the last two conferences. Less people came to participate in an organised panel or to listen

to presentations and discussions. The lower N of those attending for panels reflects many late cancellations in that category. When one or two panelists withdrew panels were also withdrawn.

Q4: Have you participated in a PCST conference before?

Figure 3 presents PCST 2016 survey respondents' participation in PCST conferences (n = 129).

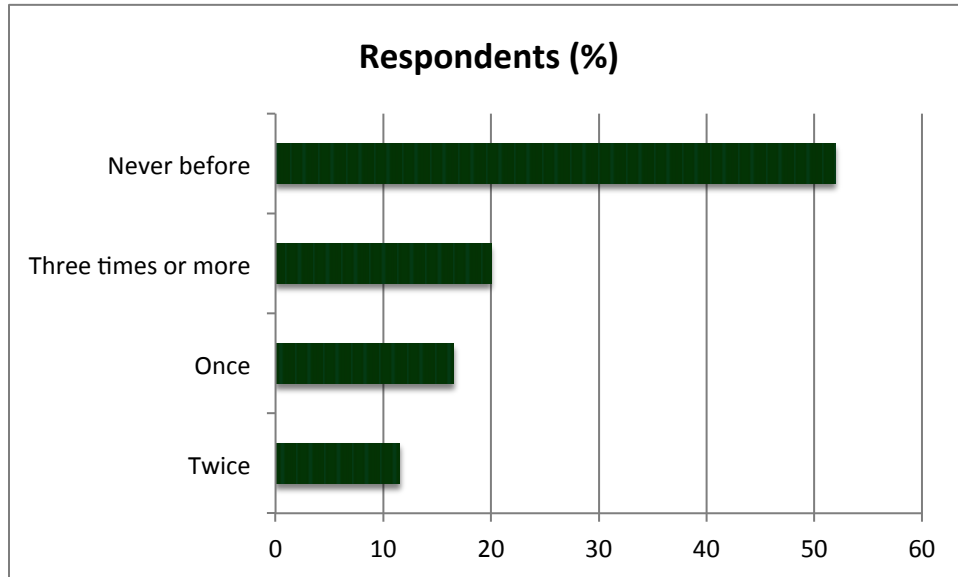


Figure 3: PCST 2016 survey respondents' participation in PCST conferences

Just over half of the participants responding to this question had not attended a PCST conference before. This is less than at the previous three conferences. We noted an elevated number of participants indicating that they had attended the conference three times or more, perhaps representing the hard core of long-term PCST conference participants. This trend was also noted in the PCST 2014 conference survey report. One fifth of participants were loyal participants of PCST conferences, however lower conference registration numbers for PCST 2016 could account for the higher percentage of committed PCST participants who had attended three conferences or more.

Table 4 compares information on participants' participation in previous PCST conferences.

PCST conference participation	PCST 2010 (%)	PCST 2012 (%)	PCST 2014 (%)	PCST 2016 (%)
Never before	67	67	67	52
Once	13	12	12	16.5
Twice	14	7	8	11.5
Three times or more	6	14	13	20
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Table 4: A comparison of participants' participation in previous PCST conferences

Q5: How did you first hear about the PCST 2014 conference?

Table 5 provides a comparison of ways in which participants have heard about PCST conferences coming up. PCST 2016 responses (n = 129)

PCST conference advertising	PCST 2010 (%)	PCST 2012 (%)	PCST 2014 (%)	PCST 2016 (%)
At earlier PCST conferences	18	17.5	16	29
Colleagues	31	47.9	52	49.5
Web	32	21.3	19	10
Social media	NA	NA	NA	3
Email	13	7.3	NA	6
Other	6	5.9	NA	2.5
TOTAL	100	99.9	87	100

Table 5: A comparison of ways in which participants first heard about PCST conferences

Colleagues (or word of mouth) are still a major way for participants to find out about PCST conferences. The number of participants who indicated that they heard about PCST 2016 through earlier conferences has also risen, perhaps confirming the interpretation that PCST 2016 contained a higher proportion of committed PCST attendees.

Three participants in PCST 2016 provided additional information about where they heard about PCST 2016: FASEJ-newsletter in email, at one of their first jobs, and the PCST email list.

Q6 How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the conference?

Table 6 provides a summary of participants' satisfaction ratings for various aspects of the PCST 2016 conference. PCST 2016 responses (n = 129)

Item	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Does to apply/did not attend
Registration and payment	29.69% 38	35.94% 46	13.28% 17	13.28% 17	7.81% 10	0% 0
Information from the administration	22.22% 28	46.03% 58	19.84% 25	8.73% 11	3.17% 4	0% 0
Accommodation	36.43% 47	39.53% 51	11.63% 15	1.55% 2	0.78% 1	10.08% 13
Content of plenary sessions	17.83% 23	55.81% 72	17.05% 22	6.20% 8	1.55% 2	1.55% 2
Content of parallel sessions (individual papers)	19.38% 25	54.26% 70	20.93% 27	4.65% 6	0.78% 1	0% 0
Content of panel sessions (organised panels)	20.16% 26	53.49% 69	20.16% 26	2.33% 3	0.78% 1	3.10% 4
Content of posters displayed	6.25% 8	34.38% 44	38.28% 49	5.47% 7	1.56% 2	14.06% 18

Item	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Does to apply/did not attend
	8	44	49	7	2	18
Content of poster oral presentations	10.08% 13	31.78% 41	20.16% 26	2.33% 3	0.78% 1	34.88% 45
Content of performances and screenings	26.36% 34	19.38% 25	15.50% 20	0.78% 1	0.78% 1	37.21% 48
Organisation of plenary sessions	29.92% 38	49.61% 63	11.81% 15	5.51% 7	0.79% 1	2.36% 3
Organisation of parallel sessions (individual papers)	29.46% 38	43.41% 56	17.05% 22	7.75% 10	1.55% 2	0.78% 1
Organisation of panel sessions (organised panels)	30.23% 39	43.41% 56	16.28% 21	5.43% 7	0.00% 0	4.65% 6
Organisation of poster oral presentations	17.05% 22	28.68% 37	16.28% 21	6.98% 9	1.55% 2	29.46% 38
Organisation of performances and screenings	21.88% 28	25.00% 32	17.97% 23	0.00% 0	1.56% 2	33.59% 43
Welcome reception	51.16% 66	26.36% 34	6.98% 9	2.33% 3	0.00% 0	13.18% 17
Gala dinner	21.60% 27	13.60% 17	14.40% 18	0.80% 1	0.80% 1	48.80% 61

Table 6: Participants' satisfaction ratings for various aspects of the PCST 2016 conference.

Participants were most satisfied (very satisfied and satisfied ratings combined) with the plenary organisation (80%), the welcome reception (77%), the accommodation (76%), the plenary content (74%), the parallel session and panel session content (both 73%) and the parallel session organisation (72%).

Participants were most dissatisfied (very dissatisfied and dissatisfied) with registration and payment (21%).

Satisfaction ratings for particular categories may be low because participants indicated that they did not attend or the item did not apply to them: Gala dinner (49%), content of screenings and performances (37%), organisation of screenings and performances (34%), content of poster oral presentations (35%), organisation of poster oral presentations (29%).

Q7 What was the best thing about the PCST 2016 conference?

The majority of participant responses (n = 102) highlighted the people, the networking with colleagues, and the sense of community as being the best things about the conference. Some noted the content, specific sessions, the organisation, and the location.

Networking with people and meeting colleagues

Almost one fifth of the respondents (n = 18) specifically noted 'networking' as being a highlight of the conference. For example, "Exposure and networking with other science communication professionals, especially researchers in the field" was a typical comment.

For many respondents (n = 18), this was very much about meeting 'people':

The audience made of interesting and courageous and cosmopolitan people.

The opportunity to meet so many people engaged in different aspects of science communication (both format and scholarship/practice).

The opportunity to meet people whose work I have cited in my own academic work (putting faces to citations, as it were) was a personal highlight.

Other respondents (n = 11) talked about meeting or interacting with colleagues:

Talking to old friends and good colleagues. It is often a lonely position to have an interest in science communication, so very important to meet once in a while

Still others (n = 6) highlighted the opportunity to meet with science communication leaders. For example: "Getting inspiration and vision from science communication legends".

There was a sense among some (n = 4) that the conference was about joining or being part of a 'community': "Community Sense / One big family".

Sharing in discussions and dialogue

The strong positive feedback about networking and meeting people translated to some respondents (n = 14) noting the good opportunities to discuss topics of mutual interest and to engage in dialogue.

As one respondent noted there was: "High-level abstract discussions about current challenges in science communication, as well as the future of the field. "

Smaller group

A few respondents (n = 5) noted that the smaller size of the conference meant there were more opportunities to interact, network and have a dialogue with people:

I appreciated it being a little smaller than normal, it helped to network and identify/locate individuals. Generally I thought there was a very friendly feel

to the conference overall, with a more supportive tone to questions/comments etc. whilst still being constructive and critical.

International nature of conference

Several respondents (n = 8) thought the international / global nature of the workshop was a highlight:

It was a real international and intercultural experience, above the most stimulating professional event I have ever attended. I very much enjoyed the presentations and the plenary sessions. I am glad I was able to attend the conference.

Diversity and quality of content

Four respondents noted the 'content' or the 'program' as being a highlight while three other respondents specifically noted the quality of the sessions.

Respondents noted the benefits of the:

- Interdisciplinarity of topics and content
- Diversity of issues
- Changing perspectives of science communication

Others (n = 5) highlighted the link between theory and practice:

The balance between different relevant subjects related to science communication research and practice.

The link between theory and practice becomes more tangible with every PCST conference

Some respondents (n = 3) appreciated the opportunity to learn at the conference or to learn about new research:

To know about the last researches, actions and activities on science communication.

Specific sessions or types of sessions

Some respondents (n = 5) highlighted the variety and quality of the plenary sessions. Likewise four respondents said the parallel sessions were a highlight, while two respondents comments on the benefits of the workshops. Other respondents noted specific sessions as highlights:

- Keynote by Dietram Scheufele
- Oral poster presentations
- Workshop on design applied to science communication (run by University of Delft)
- Big Van
- Integrated curriculum for science communication session
- The play

Location and social events

Six respondents noted the location of the conference in Istanbul, Turkey as being a highlight. Others noted highlights as being:

- Gala dinner
- Boat trip
- Hotel accommodation
- Excellent lunches

Several respondents (n = 3) noted that the conference helped to give a signal about Turkey's current political situation:

Still going to Istanbul and set an individual statement in face of the current political situation

Hospitality and organisation

Several respondents praised the local organisation (n = 4) and involvement in students, and others noted the hospitality (n = 2) of the local organisers. For example:

The general spirit. I really thank Brian, Gültekin and all the local team for getting on with the conference in spite of situation and with such dedication. But I was also surprised of how nice and eager to talk was each one during the conference. I really enjoy it a lot. The team of students that registered us and helped all time was really kind.

Q8 What could be done better next time?

Participant responses (n = 100) have been broken up into themes of advice and feedback for future PCST program organisers and PCST conference hosts/organisers.

Feedback for future PCST program organisers

Advice and feedback to future PCST program organisers included changes to the number of parallel sessions (n = 22), the diversity of conference program elements (n = 16), communication about the conference program (n = 16), plenary sessions (n = 11), poster sessions (n = 9), PCST Scientific Committee priorities (n = 8), communication to chairs and presenters (n = 7), and panel sessions (n = 3).

Too many parallel sessions

The most prevalent piece of feedback provided by participants was that PCST 2016 had too many parallel sessions. This accounted for over one fifth of participants (n = 22) providing open-ended feedback on what could be done better next time. According to these participants, the number of parallel sessions resulted in low audience numbers in many sessions, and attendees missing many sessions that they would have liked to attend. Some participants recognised the extenuating circumstances associated with PCST 2016—low registration numbers for PCST 2016 combined with the understanding that some employers would only allow their employees to attend PCST if they were accepted to present their work at the conference. However, the

majority of participants indicating too many parallel sessions wanted to see less concurrent sessions in future. Some suggestions for future parallel session organisation to reduce the number of concurrent sessions included:

- add another day to the program
- fit in presentations as part of the evening social program
- make a stricter selection of talks by the PCST Scientific Committee
- better distribute parallel sessions according to streams or tracks so that similar topics were not on at the same time
- encourage more group presentations and panel presentations to accommodate more speakers/discussion (invite more researchers to attend in groups and present their research)

Conference program elements

Sixteen participants provided suggestions for improvement that could be made to the conference program overall. While some participants gave general feedback, indicating that they wanted to see an improvement in the quality of the content (n = 2), specific suggestions included adding:

- more networking opportunities (n = 4) such as opportunities for representatives from different countries to work together on common projects to build rapport, a "Meet the experts" session at lunch, more small discussion panels and games
- more interactivity (n = 4) including less presentation and more dialogic/discussion modes of delivery, more debates, workshops and interactive formats, more time in sessions for discussion
- performances at break/lunch time (n = 2)—like the conference program in Malmo (PCST 2008)
- science communication booths for break visits
- more diversity in plenary sessions and panels (less Europe and US-centred)

Additional themes were also suggested and these would be important for future PCST Scientific Committee members to consider:

- presentations about museum learning
- a special session for first-time participants
- separate sessions for STEM and AHSS fields
- a section on live science communication (too much of surveys, blogs, social media)

Communication about the conference program

Sixteen participants indicated that future PCST program organisers could provide better communication about the conference program before and during the conference.

Some participants indicated that they specifically wanted to see better (more regular, extensive and practical) web-based communication about conference program matters in general (n = 5). For example, some requested clearer information on the website regarding program, paper/poster requirements, and general information on the conference and registration. Some

participants were confused about the overlapping deadlines for poster and paper submission deadlines.

Some participants were disappointed that they were not made aware of cancelled sessions as soon as they occurred and prior to the conference starting (n = 3). For example:

I think a lot of people were disappointed that quite a few presenters did not show up leading to cancelled sessions, and that this wasn't made clear ahead of the conference.

One participant indicated that changes to the PCST 2016 program were understandable in the circumstances however, some feedback concerned the need for better communication about program changes during the conference (n = 4). For example:

... there were some sessions canceled without letting the listeners known. So we were waiting in the assigned room wondering what was happening.

It was not transparent who will show up at the sessions and who won't. As quite a lot of people did not come due to political and security issues, I wished for information who will be present for the different sessions. At the opening it was announced that there will be information available online, but unfortunately that wasn't the case. Attending a session where one went to hear a specific person who then isn't present, was very upsetting.

Plenary sessions

Eleven participants commented on suggested improvement to the plenary sessions. Some participants (n = 5) made general comments about the need to maintain the quality of plenary presentations or provide “better” or more diverse plenary sessions. For example:

The plenary sessions were a little mixed content wise, some were really interesting, others a little less so (but I appreciate why this may have been the case).

Suggestions for improvement included the need to give plenary speakers more time (n = 2). For example:

Really top speakers - like Dietram Scheufele - should have had MORE time ... it was terrible to have him there and no time to really explore his ideas. Also ... we could have had some lively debate on the comms vs PR issue in the plenary ... invite only one really top speaker per plenary.

Suggestions for future PCST plenary speakers included inviting new experts from others fields of knowledge and inviting more scientists in natural sciences

Two participants suggested that it would be useful to incorporate more commentary on plenary sessions in other sessions. For example:

A plenary session on the use of humour was better served in the panel discussion a few days later which was actually funny at times.

One participant suggested streaming of all plenary sessions.

Poster presentations

Nine participants provided feedback related to the poster presentations. Participants specifically wanted:

- better organisation and communication of poster sessions (n = 5) – for example, no overlapping sessions for oral poster presentations and general poster viewing in different areas and clear communication on the program
- more restricted show time for posters so that presenters could interact with PCST delegates (n = 2)
- more space on the poster rows for viewing
- clearer guidance to presenters on requirements for posters presentations

Scientific committee priorities

Eight participants provided feedback that could be useful for guiding future PCST scientific committee priorities. This focused on the selection and structuring of sessions, in particular:

- considering interesting and innovative projects rather than very institutional
- providing fewer talks by being stricter on selection
- doing more work on adding coherence to sessions—providing a concept for them
- grouping all the best (or at least topic-related) presentations in one block

One participant indicated that they had two conference proposals turned down but that “the conference was riddled with people who didn't bother showing up or had very weak talks).”

Another participant indicated that the PCST program committee could demand that presenters submit the final text before the conference and publish them even online as a way to ensure quality and make discussion more fruitful.

Communication to chairs and presenters

Seven participants provided feedback that was relevant to communication from the PCST program committee to chairs and presenters. This included:

- providing better communication on structured times for talks that chairs and presenters stick to in advance of the conference (n = 4)
- allocating more time for discussion and questions during the sessions (n = 2)
- discouraging presenters from reading from reports
- ensuring that presentations match the title and abstract.

Panel sessions

Three participants provided feedback on the panel sessions. One participant indicated that they would like to see more panel sessions. Another indicated that the panels they attended were

structured like presentation sessions rather than panels (with 20-minute presentations and Q&A). Another participant called for more international diversity in panel sessions.

Conference proceedings

Two participants indicated that future conferences should include conference proceedings. One participant suggested that a PhD paper track with proceedings would be good.

Feedback for future PCST conference hosts/organisers

Feedback from participants that would be relevant for future PCST conference hosts and/or organisers included the use of technology (n = 11), the networking events (n = 7), general conference organising (n = 5), including a list of delegates (n = 3).

Technology

Eleven participants provided feedback related to the use of technology at future PCST conferences. Five participants emphasised the importance of having working internet/Wi-Fi in all conference rooms. One of these participants also added that it was important to provide information to delegates on the practicalities for its use e.g. logins etc. Three participants suggested live streaming selected sessions such as plenaries. Two participants emphasised that PCST conference organisers should not allow presenters to supply a video in lieu of a presentation if they could not attend. One participant suggested better use of social media by organisers so that delegates could follow other sessions that they were not able to attend.

Costs

Seven participants provided feedback related to the cost of attending PCST conferences. Five participants suggested that the PCST conference was too expensive and that conference organisers consider a reduced registration fee, particularly for delegates paying their own way or those from developing countries. One participant suggested that the cost of attending was not sustainable considering the cost per audience member. Another participant observed that there was a lot of food at breaks (the implication being that the event was over-catered). Only one participant suggested cancelling the conference if attendance was low:

Cancel the conference if there is a high risk of non-attendance, including plenary speakers. Some of the most interesting presentations did not take place. It was a waste of time and money.

Networking/social events

Six participants indicated that the Gala dinner too far away. While two of these participants described the dinner as “lovely” and “delicious”, these and other participants indicated that the travel time made it a long day and did not invite ongoing networking with others. One participant indicated that delegates had a very short time at the venue. Another delegate would have liked more advance warning about what the networking/social events entailed but understood the need for secure locations:

As someone who needs to schedule medications/food it would be helpful to have a bit more information on social events in advance, and/or to schedule such events with a bit more flexibility for people to leave if they are tired

etc. Again I appreciate why there may have been practical reasons around this in Istanbul.

Another participant suggested that the Gala dinner could have been done much cheaper, which would have helped attendance. Suggestions for future conference organisers related to networking/social events included:

- using social events as opportunities to share some of the local culture
- considering tours in the science and technology museums and centers
- including a little dancing

Improved communication

Four participants indicated that they would like to see more information from conference organisers prior to the conference. Two of these participants compared and spoke more favourably about the program communication provided before PCST 2014 in Brazil:

In Brazil there was more information before the conference. In Istanbul there has been some uncertainty about paper deadlines etc. So more auto-communication about the conference would be appreciated.

Better communication previous to the conference. With the political situation there was always need to understand what was the perception of the organisers.

Q9: Will you participate in the next PCST conference in New Zealand in 2018?

158 PCST 2016 participants responded to this question.

Participation in PCST 2018 in Dunedin	PCST 2010 (%)	PCST 2012 (%)	PCST 2014 (%)	PCST 2016 (%)
Yes	51	22	36	31
No	6	15	6	13
Maybe	43	63	58	56
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Table 8: A comparison of PCST participants' stated intentions of attending a subsequent PCST conference

Responses indicate that PCST participants are interested in attending PCST 2018 in New Zealand.

Q10 Any other comments on PCST2016?

Question 10 asked respondents to offer further comments on PCST 2016 (n = 68). Twelve participants commented positively on the local conference organisation. For example:

Well done to the local team who pulled it together under difficult circumstances.

Other positive general comments related to more general aspects of the PCST conference (n = 8): participants' overall experience in Turkey, the food, networking opportunities, and the responsiveness of the local team. For example:

PCST 2016 was very well organised on site. The size of the conference made it very easy to get to know people, for larger conferences it will be nice to think on ways or spaces for discussions or networking.

Six others thanked the local organisers for their hospitality. For example:

Nice warming reception from the Turkish committee. Congratulations!

Just wanted to congratulate the organising team - I think the best PCST I've yet been to.

Participants also commented positively on the quality of presentations (n = 2), parallel sessions (n = 2), panel discussions (n = 1) and keynotes (n = 1). For example:

I really enjoyed the PCST conference - particularly the keynote talks and panel discussions. The sense that the community is diverse but inclusive was very encouraging and I'd certainly try to attend future conference and meetings organised through the PCST.

Three participants expressed frustration that they could not get a refund for the registration fee despite these participants expressing security-related concerns. For example:

So disappointed I'm not getting any refund, even though I'm only a student and can't afford such a major loss. As I explained in my email, my school was not supportive of me attending after the political unrest in the area intensified.

I was extremely disappointed in how I was treated with regards to PCST2016. I registered and paid the fees out of my own personal money when the session I was producing was accepted. However, due to political tension between Egypt and Saudi Arabia I did not receive clearance to travel to Turkey. When I emailed the conference organisers to ask for a refund and explain the situation they outright replied that they can't help me. When I emailed them again to explain this was a force majeure and out of my hands they ignored my email. I find this terrible treatment unacceptable, and I am not keen in being involved with PCST again in the future because of this.

Two participants commented on poor communication by organisers. For example:

Very chaotic management (payment, emails before conference, information on paper presentation before conference, bill for conference...)

I asked several times about the books of abstracts but I don't receive any answer

Two participants commented on the expensiveness of the conference. One participant wanted to see better communication about the program (information was posted on two different websites). Another participant was disappointed with the poster session/presentation organisation because posters were on a different floor to the poster presentations. Another participants indicated that the presentations in some of the parallel sessions was too mixed to be put together usefully.

One participant was disappointed by the poor turnout to some sessions and attributed it to too many parallel sessions:

The ratio of presenters to general attendees seems v. high. Not sure how but it would be good to improve this. There were too many parallel sessions and quite a few with just 4-6 attendees which is disappointing.

In terms of useful feedback for future PCST conference organisers, participants provided the following recommendations:

1. Reduce the number of parallel sessions (n = 4) e.g. increase conference to four days to accommodate more speakers and reduce parallel sessions
2. Continue to provide engaging plenaries—speakers who can focus on the future of science communication; more radical or up-to-date presenters; more non-European expert presenters (n = 3)
3. Organise conferences closer to major hubs e.g. USA as host countries like New Zealand are too far away (n = 3)
4. Include talks by local science communicators in the host county
5. Ensure that there is a good researcher/practitioner balance
6. Maintain global membership and character of PCST throughout the PCST program
7. Provide better guidelines for posters for quality control
8. Provide a list of participants and their contact details for ongoing communication after the conference
9. Provide grants for students to attend
10. Include public health communication
11. Hold PCST conferences close to Easter as April is too early for many people
12. Provide tips about New Zealand travel to PCST 2018 registrants

Brief commentary

The survey responses from participants following the last four successive PCST conferences are strikingly similar in some respects.

Similarities

PCST participants' main motives for coming to PCST are generally stable but PCST2016 shows an increase in researchers and a decrease in those identifying primarily as teachers. Perhaps the drop in teachers/trainers can be attributed to the lack of support from some university employers to travel to Turkey for PCST 2016.

Communication with colleagues (word of mouth) is still one of the main mechanisms that participants found out about PCST 2016. The responses to the question about conference promotion (Q6) point to the importance of email and other online communication being reinforced orally or through other more direct contact with others.

Differences

While the satisfaction ratings need to be read alongside the answers to the open questions, it can be concluded that participants were most satisfied with the plenary organisation and content, the welcome reception, the accommodation, the parallel session content and organisation and panel session content. Satisfaction ratings for other items may be low because participants indicated that they did not attend or the item did not apply to them. For example 49% of participants responding indicated that they did not attend the Gala dinner.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Q1: What is your main connection with science communication?

- a. Teaching / training in science communication
- b. Professional practice in science communication
- c. Scientist who takes part in science communication
- d. Researcher on science communication
- e. Student of science communication
- f. Other (specify)

Q2: Did you register for PCST2016 and fail to attend?

Yes / No

If Yes, please say why (max. 10 words) and go no further in this survey

Q3: What was your main motive for coming to PCST 2016?

- a. Present a paper
- b. Present a poster
- c. Participate in an organised panel
- d. Network with others active in science communication
- e. Join in discussions outside the formal sessions
- f. Listen to presentations and discussions
- g. Other (specify)

Q4: Have you participated in a PCST conference before?

- a. Never before
- b. Once
- c. Twice
- d. 3 or more times

Q5: How did you first hear about the PCST2016 conference?

- a. At earlier PCST conferences
- b. Colleagues
- c. Web
- d. Social media
- e. Email
- f. Other (specify)

Q6: How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the conference?

	Very	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very	Does not apply / Did
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	satisfied				dissatisfied	not attend
Registration and payment						
Information from administration						
Accommodation						
Content of plenary sessions						
Content of parallel sessions (individual papers)						
Content of panel sessions						
Content of posters displayed						
Content of poster oral presentations						
Content of performances and screenings						
Organisation of plenary sessions						
Organisation of parallel sessions (individual papers)						
Organisation of panel sessions						
Organisation of poster oral presentations						
Organisation of performances & screenings						
Welcome reception						
Gala dinner						

Q7 What was the best thing about the PCST 2016 conference?

Q8 What could be done better next time?

Q9: Will you participate in the next PCST conference in New Zealand in 2018?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe

Q10: Any other comments on PCST2016? (max 100 words)

Appendix B: Email survey invitations to PCST 2016 registrants

Initial email invitation

Dear Fellow participants in the Turkey PCST conference,

As the new Chair of the Program Committee for the next PCST conference in Dunedin New Zealand, it is very important to get your feedback on how you found the recent Turkey PCST conference.

Could you please take five to ten minutes to complete a short survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PCST2016> by Sunday 12 June, 2016.

Your feedback will also help us to further develop program guidelines for future PCST conferences.

We will analyse the survey and send you a short summary of the results.

If you'd like to send me any other suggestions for speakers, sessions or formats, please also feel free to send me an email.

If you did not end up attending the conference, we'd still like you to answer a few questions in the survey.

And don't forget to register your interest in the 2018 conference in Dunedin -
<http://pcst2018.org/pcst18>

Kind regards

Jenni Metcalfe

Email reminder

Thanks to the 140 of you who have already completed this survey, but there is still 184 people to complete it... so if that's you then....

Could you please take five to ten minutes to complete a short survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PCST2016> by Sunday 12 June, 2016.

If you registered but were unable to go, you can still fill in the start and end – will only take a few minutes!

As the new Chair of the Program Committee for the next PCST conference in Dunedin New Zealand, it is very important to get your feedback on how you found the recent Turkey PCST conference.

Your feedback will also help us to further develop program guidelines for future PCST conferences.

We will analyse the survey and include a summary on this PCST list serv.

If you'd like to send me any other suggestions for speakers, sessions or formats, please also feel free to send me an email.

And don't forget to register your interest in the 2018 conference in Dunedin - <http://pcst2018.org/pcst18>

Jenni Metcalfe