

Play the Game Reykjavik 2007 Evaluation

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Survey of participants' satisfaction with the fifth world communication conference on sport and society, Play the Game, Reykjavik, Iceland, 28 October – 1 November 2007



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Introduction

From 28 October to 1 November 2007, the fifth international communication conference on sport and society, Play the Game, took place in Iceland. The conference was the fifth of its kind since 1997. The conference had 245 participants, 43 invited speakers, another 42 presentations and three workshops.

In co-operation with director of Play the Game, Jens Sejer Andersen, the Danish Institute for Sports Studies later sent out a questionnaire to participants in the conference, and below the Institute details the results of the survey of participant satisfaction with the conference.

Kasper Lund Kirkegaard has been responsible for developing the questionnaire and carrying out the web-survey. The report is written by Maja Pilgaard.

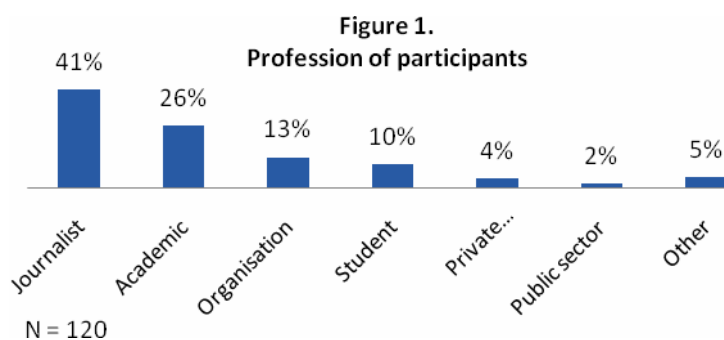
It is important to point out that this evaluation is only based on responses from participants in the conference. However, in terms of evaluations you should also keep in mind the potential participants who did not come to the conference – for instance because they found five days to be too long or it was too expensive to travel to Iceland. For obvious reasons it has not been possible to include such considerations in the report.

1. Response rates and participants

219 people were sent an e-mail with an invitation to participate in the evaluation of the conference Play the Game. 120 replied which equals a response rate of 54.8 per cent. Another 15 people – equalling 6.8 per cent - have answered the first half of the questionnaire.

76 per cent of the respondents are men, 24 per cent are women. In advance, staff and board members of Play the Game, representatives from the Icelandic co-organisers UMFI, and companions to conference participants had been excluded from the survey.

The figure below shows participants divided by professions.



1.1. Learning about the conference

The majority of participants, 38 per cent, had learned about the conference from a friend or colleague, whilst another 33 per cent had heard about the conference from other sources than those listed as options in the questionnaire.

18 per cent had learned about the conference from Play the Game's website and 12 per cent had picked up the information from Play the Game's newsletter. The brochure for the conference and telemarketing each accounted for 2 per cent of the registrations. Another 2 per cent said that they could not remember how they learned about the conference.

1.2. Previous participation

32 per cent have previously participated in Play the Game conferences. For the remaining 68 per cent, the conference in Iceland was their first experience of Play the Game. The figure below shows which of the previous conferences, the 32 per cent of participants had taken part in.

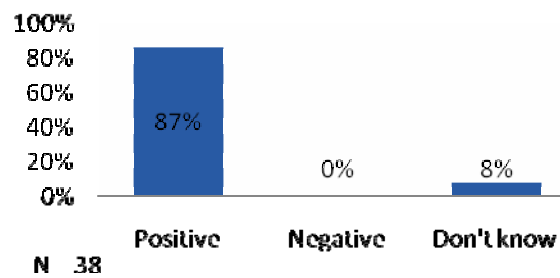
Figure 2 gives a clear indication of the view amongst participants that the quality of the conference has improved over the years.

Table 1. Share of participants in 2007 who had previously participated in

Year	Per cent
1997	7 %
2000	16 %
2002	27 %
2005	47 %

N = 38

Figure 2. In what direction has Play the Game developed?

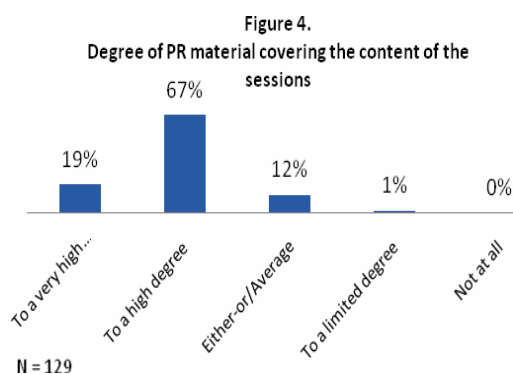
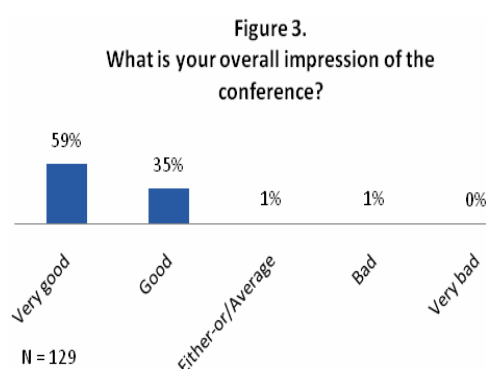


2. Satisfaction with the conference

2.1. Overall satisfaction

Respondents were asked about their overall satisfaction with the conference. Figure 3 shows that generally people have been extremely satisfied or very satisfied whilst only one per cent, equalling 1 person, had a negative impression of the conference.

The questionnaire gave respondents the opportunity to comment on the conference in their own words, and these comments can be found in appendix 1.



2.2. PR material

Figure 4 shows general agreement that the actual contents of the conference had corresponded well with the PR-material produced by Play the Game.

2.3. Newsletter

The majority experiences receiving Play the Game's electronic newsletter as a positive prelude to the conference. 19 and 36 per cent respectively find the newsletter either very useful or useful, whilst 15 per cent does not have an opinion about the newsletter. 3 per cent find the newsletter less useful, and 26 per cent did not receive the newsletter at all.

2.4. Registration process and information

Respondents are generally very satisfied with the registration process and information about registration. 83 per cent found that the registration process worked very well or well. 9 per cent have no opinion, whilst 3 per cent reported a less than satisfactory experience with registration.

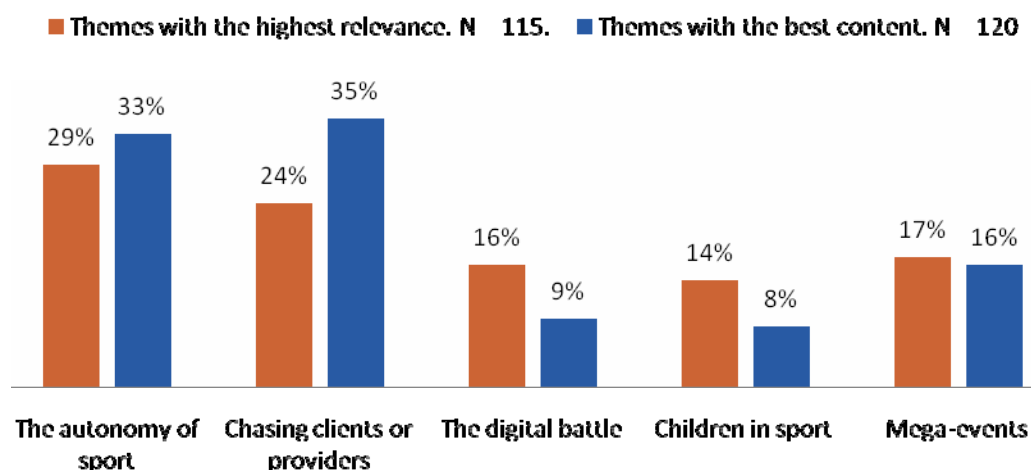
3. Conference themes and objectives

Play the Game 2007 had five main themes, and respondents were asked to pick the three most relevant. Figure 5 shows the distribution of responses. The five main themes were:

Main themes – Play the Game 2007

- 1) *The autonomy of sport: Threat or promise? (Anti-corruption, EU White paper, Football politics)*
- 2) *Chasing clients or providers: Anti-Doping at a crossroad (WADA code, doping in cycling, rights of athletes etc.)*
- 3) *The digital battle: Sport on demand versus the demands of sport (Media development, broadcasting rights)*
- 4) *Children in sport: Love or labour*
- 5) *Mega-events: Frontrunners for sport globalisation*

Figure 5 - Assessment of contents



Respondents have put forward many different ideas for themes at future Play the Game conferences and these ideas are listed in appendix 2.

3.1. Objective 1: Offering insights into international sport

One of the main objectives of the Play the Game conference was to offer insight into international sport to journalists, academics and sport officials. This objective appears to have been met amongst participants as 86 per cent responded positively to this statement. 7 per cent have no opinion and only 1 per cent did not feel that the objective had been met. Table 2 below shows answers to all three questions about fulfilment of objectives.

3.2. Objective 2: Improving the public debate about international sport

Another objective of the conference is to stimulate and qualify the public debate about international sport. As table 2 shows, 67 per cent of respondents agree that this objective has been met. However, a significant group of 19 per cent has no opinion about this issue and 9 per cent find that success in this area is limited. This a markedly higher share compared to the other objectives.

3.3. Objective 3: Facilitating networking

The third objective of the conference has been to facilitate networking between journalists, academics and officials from organisations in the field of international sport. With a positive response rate of 87 per cent, there is clear agreement that the conference has fulfilled this objective. 14 per cent have no opinion about this, whilst 3 per cent see the conference's success as limited on this parameter.

Table 2. To what extent was Play the Game successful in...

	To a very high degree	To a high degree	Either-or/Average	To a limited degree	Not at all
...offering insight to journalist, academics and sport leaders in world sport? (N = 125)	44 %	42 %	7 %	1 %	0 %
...stimulating and qualifying the public debate about world sport? (N = 124)	22 %	45 %	19 %	9 %	0 %
...facilitating networking between journalists, academics and officials in world sport? (N = 123)	29 %	48 %	14 %	3 %	0 %

4. Duration and frequency of the conference

73 per cent of respondents took part in the whole conference, whilst 12, 6, 7 and 1 per cent respectively took part for 4, 3, 2 or 1 days.

The duration of the conference was five days which one of every five participants found was too long. 86 per cent found the duration suitable whilst 2 per cent wanted the conference to be longer.

A majority of 58 per cent believes that it is a good idea to hold the conference every second year. However, 25 per cent believe it should be an annual event, whilst 7 and 1 per cent respectively find that it would be enough to hold a conference every third or fourth year. 5 per cent of the respondents have replied “don’t know.”

Although there is a high level of satisfaction with Iceland as a host nation, the majority favours that the conference takes place in different countries each time. That is the view of 69 per cent of respondents whilst 2 per cent of respondents want the conference to take place in the same country every time. A relatively large percentage of 17 do not have an opinion about the issue.

There are only positive opinions about the services rendered by the conference secretariat.

4.1. Iceland as a host nation

84 per cent find Iceland to be a really good or good host nation. 8 per cent have no opinion and only 3 per cent find Iceland less satisfactory or unsatisfactory as a host nation.

There is similarly positive response on Grand Hotel as a venue for the conference and general satisfaction with the food. 35 per cent found the food very good, 36 per cent found it good, 16 per cent had no opinion, whilst 5 and 2 per cent respectively found the food less satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

4.2. Hotel accommodation

Table 3 below shows the distribution of participants on hotels.

Table 3. At which hotel did you stay?

Grand Hotel	Cabin	Floki Inn	Youth Hostel	Other (ex. local)
53 %	25 %	3 %	9 %	10 %

N = 118

8 per cent experienced the quality of the hotel as less satisfactory and one person had a completely unsatisfactory experience. However, 86 per cent had either a very good or a good experience of their hotels.

Table 4. What did you think about the quality of the hotel?

Very good	Good	Either-or/Average	Less satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
30 %	38 %	18 %	8 %	1 %

N = 118

4.3. Number of presentations

With regards to the number of presentations, the majority agreed that it was suitable. As it can be seen in table 5 below, some respondents disagreed either wholly or in part.

Table 5. The number of presentations was suitable:

I agree	I partly agree	Either-or/Average	I disagree	I do not know
38 %	34 %	10 %	1 %	2 %

N = 122

4.4. Duration of presentations

The duration of plenary sessions were found to be suitable by the majority of respondents: 84 per cent. 10 and 13 per cent respectively found the presentations to be too long or too short. Answers about the duration of parallel sessions have the same pattern.

4.5. Quality of presentations

There is only positive response to questions about the quality of presentations. 33 and 54 per cent found the quality of presentations to be either very good or good, whilst 9 per cent had no opinion. No one had a negative impression of the presentations.

4.6. Time allocation

53 per cent of respondents felt that the time allocated to debate was suitable, whilst 18 per cent found that there was not enough time. As table 6 shows, there are different opinions about whether the amount of time allocated to networking was enough.

Table 6. How much time did you find to network with the other participants during the conference?

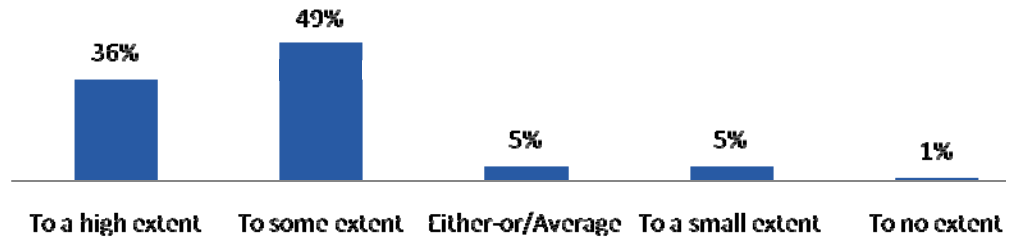
Plenty	Enough	Either-or/Average	Too little	Far too little
13 %	50 %	16 %	17 %	2 %

N = 119

5. Value of the conference

Participants in the conference generally have an expectation that the conference will give value to their daily work or studies.

Figure 6. To what extent do you expect Play the Game to give value to your daily work/studies?



N 120

6. Final remarks

As this survey shows very clearly, participants in the 2007 Play the Game conference value the conference highly. They have a good impression of the conference as a whole, the presentations have been relevant and interesting, the secretariat worked well, and the speakers have received nothing but praise. Iceland as a host nation has also been a success. The participants have an idea that the conference can give value to their daily work or studies. According to participants, the conference should be held every second year in the future and preferably in a new location each time. It should perhaps be considered to let the conference last for less than five days as 20 per cent of participants felt that five days were too long.

Appendix 1

What is your overall impression of the conference?

- Absolutely excellent
- High quality of content
- Great to experience the cross-over between academia and investigative journalism
- For a journalist covering corruption in sport, it was enlightening excellent preparation/great speakers
- Many ideas, engaging discussions, array of professionals
- the best organized conference I've ever attended
- A good blend of experts and basic education
- Fantastically organized and high quality presentations refreshingly different from the traditional academic conferences
- As always, careful organization
- It was informative, all rounded, professional and academic conference.
- Interesting in its approach.
- A lot of interesting and critical presentations
- well organized and run... a real welcoming atmosphere was created organization, level of the participant, social part, Iceland, SUPER
- A lot of important and stimulating debate that emphasized the need for good governance in sport.
- The best event I have been to in many years.
- Theory-practice transfer & interdisciplinary excellent! There's no other conference like this!
- It was irregular in some of the participants and some presentations were without people.
- Excellent atmosphere
- Very informative and a great way to make contacts
- Too less attention for Human rights in China - especially the genocide and crematories in China
- Resource persons and general arrangement was very good.

Appendix 2

Do you have any suggestions for themes or issues for the next conference?

- Regulating Sport
- Commercial sport for all - potential or threat to everyday sport, clubs and a broad sport participation.
- Sports economics in general
- Olympic Games: for athletes or for non sports exposure / image goals?
- Ownership of sports. Battle between mega organizations of sports (IOC, FIFA) and private coalitions (for cycling ASO, for football club owners + broadc., etc.)
- Autocratic sports law vs. modern internat. law.
- I think there should be focus on corruption and match-fixing in sport. You might have to call experts and journalists who have worked closely in these areas.
- More on corruption.
- What happened to NIKEs use of children labour? Do the still? South Africa and the football WC. What role did sport have during Apartheid, and now? When will politicians learn that all budgets for hosting championships will explode after they have promised to back the event financially?
- Stakeholder involvement in sports governance (players/athletes, match/event officials, administrators, fans).
- Doping, sports economy, closer look at upcoming events. Like Olympics in Beijing and the next soccer championship would be interesting issues this time.
- A theme about Sport for all - organizations and commercialization.
- Who should own sports? The event sponsors or the public? Standing up for sports journalists who expose corruption and other malpractices. Can include others sports which is prevalent in Asia for example like cricket.
- Conference has excessive dosage of football.
- Corrupted media or journalist cases in covering sport news or events.
- PTG has always been spot-on in choosing themes. Don't be afraid to repeat some of these again in 2009 (hopefully!). I suspect some (doping, mega-events especially) will be even bigger concerns in two years, and require a (re)visit.
- Thanks to all for a stimulating and fun conference!
- More for sports globalization.
- Do it again!
- Stronger focus on providing solutions to the issues raised. Provide more examples of good governance in sport and generally positive development in sport - examples includes the field of Development through Sport (though there are negative aspects here too!).
- Corruption in sports organizations and media should be the main themes of the next conference. Issues related to sports journalists should also be focused in the next conference.
- None at this time.
- Trends of sports media.

- Doping and internet.
- Sport and human rights Racism and sport.
- The paradox of the desire to enhance performance and the need to control performance enhancement (i.e. doping)
- 'Self-harm' of competitive sport (i.e. cognitive dietary restraint -> the Female Athlete Triad; playing/training with injuries)
- Sport events and maximum performance (new events?)
- Relations between sport and public health. Sports influence on the issue of obesity/public health.
- Marketing in sport.
- I was thoroughly impressed with the efforts of organizers to host & stimulate debate. Not all sessions were directly relevant to me, particularly during the last day or so, however my enthusiasm was maintained nonetheless by the overall quality of the conference.
- Sport and disability (with an emphasis on elite sport and disability) would be an interesting issue to debate at the next conference.
- I think doping should still be an issue - with focus on the providers.
- The use or influence of governments in administrating sports Sport and Globalization. Values of competitive sports. The media in the sports world.
- Hmmm - perhaps something about how sport for all and professional sport continue to move away from each other. How the pyramid structure does no longer exist in many forms of sport. And what that might mean? Other than that themes about sport and society are always very good.
- 2010 World Cup-Mega event-Benefits and disadvantages Journalism at Mega events-Ethics.
- More critics and discussion about sport place building as an environmental question.
- Corruption again. A little less doping.
- Politics and sports.
- Relationship between national governments, the European Union, and sports governing bodies. The impact of EU law on the governance of sport.
- Like in 2005, the role of media as watch dogs in sport. 2- Democracy within the structures of sports institutions.
- Organized doping.
- Corruption in sport.
- Environment, climate change and sport.
- Doping will probably - and unfortunately - be an issue also in the next few years.
- What happened in China during, and after, the Olympics? Human rights?
- Violence in the society and violence in and around the sports arenas.
- Yes, I think the focus is limited to Europe. The worst things happen in other parts of the world. The organizer also needs to get the attention of media with global reach like CNN and others.
- Less speakers and more time for parallel sessions. In advance the ones attending the conference could express their opinion regarding the schedule of the parallel sessions. Audio/video from the sessions so as journalists could get the full content of them.

- I agree that the doping issue is ever-present, but less focus on doping would give room for other items to come into focus. Other or new items could be the different journalistic approaches to local, regional and national level of government in regards to both elite and sport-for-all.
- The salaries in sport and, more generally, money and sport which can lead to other questions as the place of so rich investor or investment funds(why are they coming to sport), the place of the international federations in front of such richness.
- Just make sure it happens.
- Governance & Regulation of Sport. Commercial v social role of sport.
- International Standards to protect the rights of athletes, and their implementation
- More about the money in sports: mega events, football clubs, major leagues and their power...sport diversity: financial support, resource access of "marginal" sports (i.e. non-football team sports, individual sports);
- Fan culture and initiatives: new forms & trends;
- Commercialization vs. ethics of sport: pros/cons, experiences, best practices;
- Bidding "battles" on event.
- More authorities of the sports in the panels.
- Doping prevention Daily doping and substance abuse in the society
- Democratization of international federations.
- Journalists independence: how to avoid sponsors buying journalists' conscience and influencing in their coverage with gifts (mobile phones, free trips, etc)
- How do we preserve the human rights of athletes while fighting doping in sports?
- It will be too late by then, but the parallels between China today and the Nazi - regime, in regarding the Olympics. Crematories, killing millions of people (Falun Gong now/ Jews then), the abuse of Olympics as a facade. I think the word "Olympic" should be skipped -it's just a money/business-event.
- May at these parallel sessions there could be one question or themes from the presenter to be discussed in each group. Maybe this could increase discussion and maybe give new ideas and thoughts to the presenter too.
- The future of sport and climate change - how will global changes change the world of sport?
- Since most attendees are media they should be more international – too concentrated on Danish.
- Time allocated for debates should be increased and more sportsmen and woman be invited to share their experience with the audience. Time should be increased for presenters so that topics are covered effectively, debated and recommendations arrived at.
- Criminal aspects, investigation of criminal networks, maybe it's possible to get an investigator/official talking about findings???
- Player quotas league restructuring.