

What's NEXT?

The mission of NEXT Exhibits + Creative Communication is to provide creative, inventive, engaging, fun, eye-popping, smile-inducing, mind-thrilling exhibitions, shows and programs for museums and science centers. We create learning experiences that are memorable, meaningful, and joyful. NEXT will also work with clients on strategic planning, operational issues, staff training, and the more mundane issues that are a central part of building a culture of excellence within an institution.

NEXT focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on exhibitions and themes related to science, engineering, and technology, and their impacts on society.

NEXT was founded in 2007 by Alan Nursall. Mr. Nursall has 25 years experience in the science center and museum community. During his career at Science North in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, helped develop the center into a facility renowned for its innovative approach to science education and its integration of well-trained staff, known as Bluecoats, into the visitor experience. He held a variety of positions, and served as Science Director since 2000, responsible for the entire visitor experience at Science North and its companion facility, Dynamic Earth. This included exhibits, programs, education, theaters, and the staff and operations to support those activities.



Selected NEXT Exhibits + Creative Communication projects:

- *BodyTrek* immersive theatre, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Denver, CO (with Science North and Jeff Kennedy Associates) – NEXT is participating as a script and science advisor for a new immersive theatre on human physiology. (opening March 2009)



- *Rocks to Riches* immersive theater, Xstrata Nickel Gallery, Dynamic Earth/ Science North – NEXT produced the complete story treatment and script for a new multimedia, immersive theater on mineral processing. In an organization with a long history of innovative theaters, *Rocks to Riches* pushes the envelope once more, taking visitors behind the scenes of Sudbury's massive processing facilities that extract from the rock much of the world's supply of nickel and copper. (opening June 2008)

- *Sea Creatures* traveling exhibition, Science North – NEXT worked with the science and design team at Science North to develop a conceptual plan for a 6000 sq ft traveling exhibition, their next big blockbuster. (opening May 2009)



**Alan Nursall, Principal**

Alan Nursall is the Principal of NEXT and has 25 years experience in the science centre and museum industry. Alan joined Science North in 1984 and was a leader in making Science North one of the most influential and respected science centers in the world. In addition, during his tenure with Science North, he worked on exhibition development and interpretive planning on projects around the world. In 2000, he was appointed Science Director, responsible for all aspects of the science centre visitor experience, including exhibits, education, outreach, and operations. During his tenure as Science Director, the centre won three national awards for exhibitions and the visitor experience.

In 2007, Alan left Science North to start NEXT Exhibits + Creative Communication, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in the creation of great exhibits, shows, and other experiences for science centers and museums. Alan brings to the table over two decades of experience in interpretive planning, concept development, design and implementation, staff training and operations, and strategic planning. In addition, he is a skilled and experienced presenter, with countless live presentations under his belt, along with a weekly science segment broadcast nationally on Discovery Channel Canada since 1996. He continues to work closely with Science North.

Experience prior to NEXT:**Selected Science North projects (as Science Director)**

- *Ends of the Earth* travelling exhibition – 6000 sq ft traveling exhibition on the Arctic and Antarctic (opened March, 2007)
- *The Climate Change Show* object theatre (Best Exhibit or Show, 2006, Canadian Association of Science Centres)
- *Human Machine* special exhibition/*BodyZone* permanent installation (opened 2004)
- *Discovering Chimpanzees: the remarkable world of Jane Goodall* travelling exhibition (Best Exhibit or Show, 2003, Canadian Association of Science Centres)
- Dynamic Earth concept and schematic plan (opened 2003)
- TD Canada Trust Toddler's Treehouse (opened 2001)

Selected external projects (with Science North):

- National Hurricane Museum & Science Center, Lake Charles, LA (with Reich+Petch) – conceptual development and feasibility study
- Western Canada Aviation Museum, Winnipeg, Manitoba (with Reich+Petch) – conceptual development and feasibility study
- Science Gallery, Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg, Manitoba – redevelopment plan (opened March 2008)
- 'Imiloa - the Mauna Kea Astronomy Education Center, Hilo, Hawai'i (with Aldrich Pears Associates) – exhibit and theatre planning and design (opened 2006)
- Canada Marine Discovery Centre, Hamilton, Ontario – exhibit planning and design (opened 2004)

Professional memberships and activities:

- Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC)
 - *Great Canadian Science Adventure* development team (Chair, Exhibit Management Team, 2003-present)
 - Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC)
 - ASTC Leading Edge Awards (Chair 2007-present; founding member 2004)
 - ASTC Conference Committee (Chair 1996-98; member 1993-96)
 - Canadian Science Writers Association
 - American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
 - Royal Canadian Geographical Society
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Teaching and media:

- Host, *Science and the City*, *Daily Planet*, Discovery Channel Canada – Since 1996, Alan has created and produced a weekly science column for the science news program *Daily Planet*, broadcast nationally on Discovery Channel Canada. Alan has also acted as a guest host on *Daily Planet*.
- Faculty, *Science Communication* Graduate Diploma program, Laurentian University/Science North – Alan teaches a graduate-level course called *Communicating Science Through Exhibits*.



Selected recent publications:

- Nursall, A., 2006. Playing hockey in the science centre, in C. Yao (ed.) *A Guide to New Science Centers*, Altamira Publishing.
- Nursall, A., 2005. Writing for the crowd, *ScienceLink*, newsletter of the Canadian Science Writers Association, Vol 26, no. 2, April 2005
- Nursall, A., 2003. Building public knowledge: collaborations between science centres and industry. *International Journal of Technology Management*, 25: 381-389.
- Occasional contributions to *Crucible*, members magazine for the Science Teachers Association of Ontario (STAO)

Work experience:

- 2007 – present: **NEXT Exhibits + Creative Communication, Inc.**, Sudbury, Ontario
NEXT was established as a consulting firm specializing in science communication for museums, television, and other media. Clients include Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Discovery Channel Canada and Science North/Dynamic Earth.
- 1984 – 2007: **Science North**, Sudbury, Ontario
2000 – 2007: *Science Director*
Responsible for all exhibits, education, programs, and operations in the science centre; development of travelling exhibitions and other major science experiences for use at the science centre and in other locations. Responsibility for visitor experience at Dynamic Earth added in 2005. Also responsible for Science North participation in Science Communication Graduate Diploma, a partnership with Laurentian University.
- 1996 – 2000: *Senior Scientist*
Responsible for initiating and completing projects throughout science centre
- 1984 – 1996: *Program Planner, Atmosphere Lab*, then *Program Director, Natural Sciences*
Responsible for experience development and operations in specific science labs and galleries; responsible for theatre and movie production

Recent professional development:

- July 2006: *Museum Leadership Institute*, Getty Leadership Institute, Los Angeles, CA

Recent awards (as team leader):

- June 2006: *The Climate Change Show*, Best exhibition or show, Canadian Association of Science Centres
- June 2003: *Discovering Chimpanzees: The remarkable world of Jane Goodall*, Best exhibition or show, Canadian Association of Science Centres