

MIT Museum

The MIT Museum had a strong year across all aspects of its operations. The main galleries at 265 Massachusetts Avenue served 85,000 visitors, representing an increase of 17 percent over the previous year, and total visitation to all of the museum's galleries exceeded 110,000, representing an increase of 14 percent from the previous (record) year. Embedded within these figures is a fivefold increase in the number of visitors participating in educational programs, the single area of greatest growth in the museum's operations. A further sign of strength in this area was the success of the third annual Cambridge Science Festival, which attracted more than 30,000 visitors to some 250 different activities and events in more than 30 different venues, including the museum itself.

These visitor figures reflect in part the continuing success of the museum's new ground floor facilities at 265 Massachusetts Avenue. The Mark Epstein Innovation Gallery has now established itself as a successful introduction to the museum. Under the terms of the museum's externally funded Public Engagement with Research at MIT initiative, several new temporary exhibitions have been installed in this gallery, including *Connections*, featuring the work of the Media Lab's Sociable Media Group, and *Luminous Windows*, a display of six works of contemporary holographic art through the windows on Front Street during the winter months. At the same time, the gallery has also proven to be a popular venue for a wide variety of functions, and the museum store has continued to prosper in its new location alongside the museum entrance.

Toward the end of the year, the museum was notified that it had been successful in securing a grant from the National Science Foundation, in partnership with three other cities, to establish a National Science Festival Network. This award underscores the strategic significance of the MIT Museum's decision to launch the Cambridge Science Festival as a flagship Institute outreach initiative.

Collections

The museum processed 34 new acquisitions representing more than 15,400 items. Highlights included: the Alden design collection, work from one of the oldest and most important yacht design firms in America, with over 10,000 plans for more than 1,200 designs; papers, drawings, models and photographs from the professional practice and teaching career of Imre Halasz, renowned architect, urban planner, and teacher at MIT; the manuscript collection of MIT professor Robert W. Mann, along with over 1,000 original color slides documenting his research work; a collection of scientific equipment used by the Department of Electrical Engineering in the 19th and early 20th centuries; and the hologram "The Good Medicine Cabinet" by British artist Pearl John.

Twenty-seven new loans were made for exhibitions on campus and at other institutions. We loaned work by late MIT professor Claude Shannon to the Heinz Nixdorf Museum Forum, Paderborn, Germany, for the exhibition *Codes and Clowns: Claude Shannon – Jongleur der Wissenschaft* [Juggler of Science].

Work to upgrade and monitor storage space for collections continued. A basement storage room was outfitted with 340 sq ft of compact shelving to accommodate boxed and small objects. Compact shelving provides three times the storage capacity of standard shelf units in multiple aisles. A grant was received from a local foundation to purchase nineteen data loggers monitoring temperature and humidity in all exhibition galleries and storage spaces.

The curatorial team completed work on a major digital collections management system with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the system is now actively in use, particularly supporting two new projects: digitization of the Edgerton photographic collection and a technology project designed to make more of the museum's stored collections accessible to the public online. An expert on information technology for museums and collections advised staff on the development of a five-year plan for collections information management.

Architecture and Design Collection

The architecture and design unit curated/organized and installed 10 exhibitions during the year. *By Way of Broadway: New York Photographs by Cervin Robinson* (April–August 2008), highly praised by *Boston Globe* architecture critic Robert Campbell, presented the work of one of the most widely published architectural photographers working today. After curating the exhibition for the Wolk Gallery of the School of Architecture and Planning, the architecture and design unit organized the installation of the exhibition in New York at the Architectural League/Municipal Art Society's gallery (April–May 2009).

In the Compton Gallery, *Red Lines, Death Vows, Foreclosures, Risk Structures: Architectures of Finance from the Great Depression to the Subprime Meltdown* (September–December 2008) exhibited the work of Center for Advanced Visual Studies visiting artist Damon Rich (of the Center for Urban Pedagogy in New York) on the rise of risk management as a form of urban planning and the impact of financial risk on America's built environment.

A Wolk Gallery exhibition of student work, *Des-Comp.08*, in early September was followed by *Fading Hutongs* (September–December 2008). Through the work of a Portuguese photographer, Júlio de Matos, *Fading Hutongs* documented a rapidly vanishing landscape and social culture in Beijing's ancient center city. Also in Wolk, *Working in Mumbai: RMA Architects* (February–April 2009), curated in collaboration with MIT architecture professor Rahul Mehrotra, examined RMA Architects' urban planning, historic preservation, and building design projects in India.

In the Compton Gallery, *Ports and Ships: Photographs by Andrea Frank* (February–June 2009) was MIT visual arts instructor Frank's response through the lens to issues of globalization, containerization, and the international shipping trade.

Hollowed: Collaborations by Shadal/Jahn and Cati Vaucelle, organized for the Epstein Innovation Gallery (March–September 2009), raised questions about technology's role in human social interaction. Also installed in that gallery is MIT architecture professor

J. Meejin Yoon's *Low Rez Hi Fi* (April–September 2009) and an LED net that engages pedestrians on Massachusetts Avenue with its responsive behavior.

The loan exhibition *Félix Candela: Engineer, Builder, Structural Artist* (April–September 2009), organized in collaboration with the Princeton University Art Museum, was installed in the museum's main galleries in the spring. Spanish-born Félix Candela (1910–1997) is recognized today as one of the most important structural designers of the 20th century. His thin shell concrete roof structures, based on the hyperbolic paraboloid geometric form, were highly innovative but have been little studied. The exhibition, which examines Candela's process of design and construction through study models, photographs, and drawings loaned by Columbia University's Avery Library, was made possible by support from the deans of Engineering, Architecture, and the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; the Program in Science, Technology, and Society; the Department of Architecture; the Spanish Consul General in Boston; and a corporate funder.

Most of these exhibitions were accompanied by gallery talks, opening symposia, or other educational programs organized by the architecture and design unit, notably lectures on architectural practice in India by Rahul Mehrotra and Cornell University professor of architecture Mary Woods, lectures on Candela by professors David Billington and Maria Garlock of the Princeton University Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and a panel discussion opening the *Hollowed* exhibition with professor Henry Jenkins of MIT Comparative Media Studies and the exhibiting artists.

The architecture and design unit collaborated with Stanford University to install our traveling exhibition, *Wacław Zalewski: Shaping Structures*, at the John A. Blume Earthquake Engineering Center and with the Center for Book Arts in New York in a collections loan to their exhibition *Artists' Books as (Sub)Culture*.

The archive of internationally renowned architect, urban planner, and educator Imre Halasz (1926–2003), who taught at MIT for over 40 years, was donated to the Architecture and Design Collection this year by the Imre Halasz Trust. Born in Hungary, Halasz was educated in Budapest, Paris, and Leiden and arrived at MIT in 1957. His projects included the NASA Electronics Research Center in Cambridge (1968), the Don Bosco Technical High School in Boston (1971), and a reconstruction plan for the historic district of Santiago (1978–1979). The Halasz archive, a highly significant resource for architectural and urban history research and pedagogy, is supported by a grant from the Imre Halasz Trust funding its storage, conservation, processing, and digitization.

Other additions to the collection this year included significant works from Portuguese photographer Júlio de Matos (10 prints of Beijing for the exhibition *Fading Hutongs*), New York photographer Cervin Robinson (32 prints made for the exhibition *By Way of Broadway*), and MIT faculty member Andrea Frank (30 prints made for the exhibition *Ports and Ships*).

Eight interns worked under the supervision of the architecture and design unit on collections and exhibitions projects, including students from Wellesley College, Boston University, Boston Architectural College, Connecticut College, and Tufts University. Our participation in the Tufts Architectural Studies program has been ongoing for six years and has brought a dozen students into the museum for term-long internships. This highly successful collaboration has helped place several students in graduate programs in museum studies or professional museum positions.

Collections projects continued apace during the year, supported by intern participation. Work with uncatalogued drawings in the Architecture Thesis collection (1948–1968), one of the most important resources in the country for the study of architectural pedagogy, has helped prepare that collection for public access for the first time by means of the museum's new collections database. Similar work was completed this year for parts of the Architects Collaborative archive (including several supplemental gifts received this year and in recent years), the Mary Otis Stevens/Thomas McNulty collection, and Buckminster Fuller material. Interns (with the assistance of curatorial assistant Denise Wernikoff) completed rehousing, inventory, and partial cataloguing of one of our most significant collections, the Creative Photography Laboratory archive, which includes photographic prints by some of the most important art photographers working in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s.

This year the architecture and design unit assisted 60 visiting researchers and responded to 196 collections inquiries. Our collections appeared in several books, including *The First American Women Architects* (University of Illinois Press), *Pioneering Women in Architecture in Northern California* (McFarland), *The Architecture of Harry Weese* (W.W. Norton), and *Landscape, Art and Identity in 1950s Britain* (Ashgate), and in the film production *Daniel Burnham and the 1893 Fair* (Archimedia Workshop).

Hart Nautical Collections

In July 2008, the MIT Museum acquired the internationally known John Alden Company yacht design collection of 14,000 plans and related records. The firm, founded in Boston by John Alden in 1908, had produced 1,251 designs as of the end of 2008. Alden was trained by B. B. Crowninshield (class of 1888) and hired many Course XIII alumni over the years, including Clifford Swaine '23, who became Alden's chief designer from the 1930s through the 1950s. With the addition of the Alden collection, MIT now holds the most important yacht design collections in the world.

An additional 8,000 photographs and 7,000 plans from Hart have been scanned and will soon be added to the museum's collections database for public access.

In July 2008, we opened a new exhibit in the Epstein Innovation Gallery titled *Klein Side Scan Sonar: A World Leader in Ocean Exploration*. Developed in collaboration with Martin Klein '62, the exhibit included three historic Klein Associates, Inc., side scan sonar units from the Hart Nautical Collections, as well as photos and related objects from our Harold E. Edgerton Collection, and illustrated key MIT connections to the development of this critically important ocean floor sensing technology. Marty Klein presented a talk in October in conjunction with the exhibit.

A photographic exhibit about liquid natural gas tankers was installed at the museum in March 2009, drawing on photographs from the General Dynamics Quincy Shipyard Collection. The exhibit acknowledges the role of shipyard general manager Lloyd Bergeson '38 in leading the design of these advanced tankers that were cutting-edge energy transportation systems in the late 1970s.

Our ongoing collaboration with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI) led to the institute's first appearance at the Cambridge Science Festival in April 2009. WHOI director Susan Avery and director of research Larry Madin supported a general WHOI display at the science carnival and a larger display in the Epstein Innovation Gallery on the Ocean Observation Initiative. We have committed to be the next venue for the WHOI exhibition *Exploring the Arctic Seafloor*, produced by MIT/WHOI joint program alumnus Chris Linder '96, which will be shown in the Compton Gallery this July through December.

The curator organized several public programs. A panel discussion about global container shipping with MIT professor Henry Marcus, his former student Costas Bardjis '82, and Dr. Judith Pederson of the MIT Sea Grant Program was held in April in conjunction with the *Ports and Ships* exhibition. In May, the Museum collaborated with the MIT Sea Grant Program and the MIT Nautical Association in hosting a symposium presenting cutting-edge videography, remote broadband broadcasting, and footage of the Volvo Ocean Race during the race stopover in Boston.

Holography Collection and Holography and Spatial Imaging Initiative

The exhibition *Luminous Windows: Holography for the 21st Century* (December 2008–March 2009) was developed with the following objectives: to engage new techniques in holographic imaging for urban scale display; to develop a window exhibition transcending the architectural limits and operational hours of the MIT Museum with virtual, three-dimensional imagery offering spectral color and luminosity to the city street and winter nights; and to reignite holography in the public's imagination and inspire a new generation of scientists and artists to further explore the medium.

A broad, international call was issued to the holography community to attract varied and advanced technological and artistic approaches. An independent selection committee chose six holograms based on artistic merit and image quality related to technological advances such as digital processes, emulsion chemistry, laser technologies used in production, and lighting technologies used in replaying holograms. The six artworks



WHOI Ocean Observation Initiative scientist Al Plueddemann talking with a family about undersea technology at the MIT Museum on the opening day of the Cambridge Science Festival.

were *Insights* by Michael Bleyenberg, *Light Rain* by Betsy Connors, *ANN* by Paula Dawson, *The Good Medicine Cabinet* by Pearl John, *Thera* by Ikuo Nakamura, and *Laccolith* by Sally Weber.

The exhibition was visible from outside the Innovation Gallery, on the street and sidewalks of Massachusetts Avenue, every evening from dusk until 2 am. A large, public celebration opened *Luminous Windows*, and thousands of people saw the exhibition, which demonstrated the museum's commitment to supporting the field and to generating opportunities for the public's engagement with and understanding of holography.

On the occasion of this exhibition, the museum organized and hosted an interdisciplinary forum, "Photons, Neurons and Bits: Holography for the 21st Century" (May 6–7, 2009), focusing on the leading edges of holography and potential partner fields. MIT president emeritus Charles Vest opened the forum with a keynote address. MIT's culture of innovation provided the setting. The Institute's significant contributions to the advancement of holography from the age of film to the digital age provided background, as current wide-ranging and intensive applications of digital technologies presented active and emerging areas of holography innovation for discussion. Examples included volume holography for biological research, 3-D optical illusions for brain research, and 3-D "seeing machines" for the sight-impaired.

The MIT Museum identified the following program of future activities for the Holography and Spatial Imaging Initiative:

- Create an institutional "home" for holography—a locus for collections, exhibitions, discussions, and debate grounded in MIT's ongoing art, science, and engineering research in the broad field of holography and spatial imaging.
- Develop a multifunctional website focused on "crowd sourcing," with a view to making the museum's extensive holography collections more accessible to a wider audience.
- Mount an annual winter exhibition in the main front windows of the museum on Massachusetts Avenue. In years with an odd number, the exhibition will be based on an international call for loan display objects; in years with an even number, it will draw on works from the museum's own collections.
- Establish the Holography Forum as a biennial event.
- Continue to develop new holography exhibitions and programs. For example, we are currently working on two holography-related "mini-exhibitions" for fall 2009 as part of our Public Engagement with Research at MIT project: Holographic Video with Michael Bove and students from the MIT Consumer Electronics Laboratory and Marine Holocamera with George Barbastathis and students from the 3D Optical Systems Group.

Science and Technology Collection

The Science and Technology Collection made 13 new accessions in 2009 (totaling more than 2,000 individual items), including the Herbert Goldstein Collection, a large collection of instruments and papers documenting the history of the Department of Mechanical Engineering's 2.007 course (Design and Manufacturing); an important collection of General Radio instrument prototypes; and the official Smoot Stick as part of the Institute's 50th anniversary celebration of the "Smooting" of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge.

Exhibition projects included *Connections*, a collaboration with the Sociable Media Group of the MIT Media Laboratory that opened in February 2009 in the Mark Epstein Innovation Gallery, and *Taking the Next Giant Leaps* and *MIT Goes to the Moon*, which opened in June 2009 as part of the MIT Giant Leaps symposium. In addition, for the Boston Pops 2009 season, we created a special display showcasing the work of the MIT Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics for Symphony Hall. *Taking the Next Giant Leaps* is a joint project with the Museum of Science to develop a traveling exhibition aimed at middle and high school students to interest them in contemporary aerospace engineering. *MIT Goes to the Moon* is a special historical display for the 40th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing.

Science and Technology worked extensively with the List Visual Arts Center to support the *Matthew Day Jackson: The Immeasurable Distance* exhibition that opened in May 2009. A traveling version of the museum's *Singular Beauty: Simple Microscopes from the Giordano Collection* is now on display at the Linda Hall Library in Kansas City, MO. Preparations for a new display showcasing the Institute-wide Edgerton digitization project are being made for a fall 2009 opening. Finally, we are collaborating with the Heinz Nixdorf Forum in Germany to create the first European exhibition of the Claude Shannon mechanical toy collection to open in November 2009.

The museum's anniversary exhibition project, *MIT 150*, has nearly completed its initial phase of outreach and nominations. The exhibition website went live in February, and we have collected several hundred nominations. Specific outreach events for students, alumni, and faculty have been developed and have reached more than 500 individuals in person as well as the extended MIT community through various web-based campaigns. The museum is collaborating with the Nobel Museum in Stockholm to establish a postdoctoral fellowship that will support the *MIT 150* exhibition project in 2009–2010.

Curator of science and technology Dr. Deborah Douglas gave talks, lectures, and programs reaching nearly 700 people. The museum hosted key programs for the Giant Leaps symposium, including a special event honoring the late Dr. Robert C. Seamans Jr., distinguished government leader, MIT professor and dean, and longtime MIT Museum Advisory Board member, in which astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin participated.

The Harold and Esther Edgerton Family Foundation continued to provide major funding for the digitization of the collections of the late professor Harold E. Edgerton. In the past year, the museum has now completed cataloging and scanning work on a

unique collection of 9,100 color slides, cataloged more than 300 films, and assisted in the transfer of six films to high-definition digital formats. Cataloging and scanning of the 7,000 Edgerton negatives is ongoing and will be completed in 2009. Together with our partners across MIT, the museum hopes to apply for additional grants to support the cataloging of the Edgerton artifacts collection.

Dr. Douglas and her assistant Ariel Weinberg continue to make major progress cataloging the Science and Technology Collection in the museum's new collections database. Together with four interns from Simmons College's Master's in Library Science program, they undertook the inventory and processing of key components of the Robert W. Mann Collection, Douglas Ross Collection, Robert C. Seamans Jr. Collection, Herbert Goldstein Collection, and Harold Edgerton Collection. As part of the Matthew Day Jackson project with the List Visual Arts Center, the MIT Museum coordinated the digitization of *Luminary* and *Colossus*, the two computer programs used for the Apollo 11 mission. In addition to document scans, we are working with NASA, Draper Laboratory, and private specialists to create an emulation of these two famous programs. With the support of a part-time curatorial assistant, we have completely rehoused the museum's extensive slide rule collections. Staff have responded to more than 240 separate inquiries regarding the collection and assisted reporters, documentary filmmakers, students, and museum curators from around the world.

Education and Public Programs

The MIT Museum provided over 300 public and educational programs serving nearly 15,000 people this year. There was significant growth in all four core audiences: middle and high school students, families, adults, and the MIT community.

In total, the programs department provided 147 workshops and tours to almost 3,000 middle and high school students, an increase of 107 percent over the number of programs provided in FY2008. *Learning Lab: The Cell*, an ongoing collaboration with the MIT Center for Environmental Health Sciences, received support from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations to further teacher professional development efforts in molecular biology and work toward bringing *The Cell* to interested museums and universities across the country. New school programs included a prototype middle school LabLink connecting seventh- and eighth-grade students from Cambridge Public Schools with graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in their laboratories at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research through videoconferencing techniques.

FY2009 also saw growth in family programming, with over 800 individuals participating in robotics-related activities during February's National Engineers Week—an increase of 210 percent over FY2008 participation—and more than 1,300 participants and spectators of all ages joining the 11th annual Friday After Thanksgiving Chain Reaction event. A large effort was made to mount a sizable program of events and exhibits as the museum's contribution to the 2009 Cambridge Science Festival. Thirty-four events over nine days served more than 1,600 students, families, and community members. Examples include Lunch with a Luminary, Engineering Google, and hands-on science and engineering activities. Two temporary exhibits—a digital installation of

Merce Cunningham's work in conjunction with the Boston Cyberarts Festival and an exploration of the evolution of *Darwin's Gaze* by Steve diPaola—added to the festivities.

Soap Box, the museum's flagship engagement program connecting the public with MIT researchers, continued to draw large audiences of more than 400 individuals to the live events. The fall Soap Box series focused on the future of the news, while spring events organized in collaboration with the MIT Energy Initiative explored recent innovations in solar energy. Archived Soap Box videos remain a hit on MIT World, having attracted more than 95,000 viewers to date. In total, FY2009 welcomed over 3,000 adults to the museum's varied public debates, talks, and performances. These events included a range of arts-related programming, debates around the museum's newest exhibitions, and back-to-the-basics science workshops. Highlights included "Machines with Eyes and Texting Spies: The Shifting Lines of Public/Private" (a panel discussion with the MIT Sociable Media Group and the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard in support of *Connections*) and the final day of MIT's Darwin Bicentennial Symposium (organized by professor Jonathan King and the Massachusetts Darwin Bicentennial Project).

The programs department greatly expanded its work with the MIT student community in FY2009. Three undergraduate courses—2.00b Toy Product Design, SP.718 D-Lab: Health, and 2.722/SP.722 D-Lab: Design—partnered with the museum to connect students with the public. Thirteen student night events were held with and for various segments of the undergraduate and graduate student populations on Friday evenings throughout the year. In total, more than 3,000 individuals participated in events such as the ever-popular Energy Night organized by the Energy Club and the MIT 150 Study Break, planned by the MIT Student Ambassadors to help generate excitement for the museum's upcoming celebration of MIT's 150th anniversary. Such student night events will continue into FY2010 as a grant-based program whereby student groups can apply for funding to create innovative events connecting the MIT community and the public.

Cambridge Science Festival

The Cambridge Science Festival continued to grow in its third year, and the opening day science carnival was moved to Kresge Auditorium with the addition of stage and lawn space to accommodate the 8,000 visitors and more than 50 exhibiting science organizations. A series of high-profile events were added to the nine-day schedule.

New York Times managing editor Jill Abramson was the keynote speaker at the inaugural journalism symposium, The Future of Science Journalism. Panelists included *New York Times* environmental reporter Andy Revkin, *Scientific American* online editor Ivan Oransky, and *NOVA*'s Evan Haddingham. The Cambridge City Council Chambers became the backdrop for "Meltdown: What Everyone Needs to Know and Do About Energy," hosted by Dr. Eric Lander and featuring the MIT Energy Initiative. To mark the 40th anniversary of the moon landings, MIT's Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics collaborated with the festival in organizing a Sally Ride Science Festival for 800 middle school students.

Administration

Development

Forty-three donors generously made gifts and grants to the museum in FY2009 totaling \$443,337. This amount includes the \$300,000 that was received from an anonymous local foundation for our successful completion of a challenge grant for the Public Engagement with Research at MIT initiative. We also received grants from the Lord Foundation to enable us to launch our Museum Technologies Initiative, the Alice Willard Dorr Foundation for new equipment to monitor and improve collections storage spaces, and the T. Backer Fund to seed planning for our *MIT 150* exhibition. BP America made a grant to support our education program. Four donors made gifts to the Hart Nautical Collections, including John Lednicky '44 (ocean engineering), who is a longtime faithful donor, and the Ayco Charitable Foundation. Twenty-nine donors provided unrestricted gifts, which are invaluable in these challenging times. The Council for the Arts continued its much-appreciated support of our exhibitions program and the Friday After Thanksgiving Chain Reaction.

The Cambridge Science Festival is significantly supported by corporate sponsors and institutional donors, which gave \$310,000 this year. The festival was also successful in winning a third competitive grant of \$40,000 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Adams Arts Program.

Retail and Functions

FY2009 is the first full year the expanded MIT Museum Store has operated on the ground floor. During this time, gross sales have increased 44 percent. Based on holiday sales in 2008, the store manager adapted the merchandise assortment to include more lower-priced items and to focus more on the adult market. These changes were instrumental in maintaining sales volume during challenging economic times.

During FY2009, it was recognized that the store's current size and appearance limit the number and types of products that can be offered, in turn limiting sales. The museum hired a well-known museum retail consulting firm to conduct a review of current store space and operations. The firm concluded that an increase in the space coupled with a moderately priced redesign would increase annual sales while also enhancing the store's ability to sell higher-end products through enticing displays. Therefore, the Museum Store is embarking on a modest expansion to be completed in September. It is anticipated that the cost of renovations will be recouped within one year, providing the basis for expanded revenues over the long term.

The functions business also achieved excellent results, exceeding the total sales goal by 9 percent. The number of events increased by 7 percent over FY2008, with 76 events booked. Given the number of cancellations and the exceptionally ambiguous business climate, this is significant. MIT clients represented 75 percent of the business, and corporate clients and others represented 25 percent.

Public Relations and Marketing

With the Mark Epstein Innovation Gallery in its second year of operation and the Cambridge Science Festival in its third, the marketing department concentrated efforts on raising awareness of the MIT Museum by expanding all varieties of communications with different constituencies and instituting a “new ideas” theme throughout most visual communications.

This year the museum began active use of Facebook, Twitter, and other emerging social networking tools in more robust ways than just for promotional purposes. These new networks provide opportunities for engaging the public with our offerings that are both physical and virtual, for learning more about our audience and their interests, for improved internal communications, and for more contact with other museums and like-minded cultural and educational institutions and people.

Using marketing techniques such as ensuring consistency in branding, positioning, and messaging; providing excellent and timely service to news organizations; and employing a variety of media to get the message out, the MIT Museum continues to expand audiences through its solid promotion and publicity foundation. With the number of programs increasing dramatically at the museum, our challenge is to continue to attract and grow audiences in the face of not only reduced financial resources but also an altered media landscape that becomes more and more fragmented. Interestingly, audiences seem to desire an increasing volume of personalized messages and communications—an invitation for even more creativity.

Overall, the good news is that our audience has been steadily increasing. “Stay vacations” and an increase in local and worldwide interest in science education will likely continue to have a positive impact on museum visitation.

Technology

The MIT Museum Technologies Initiative has just received a second year of funding to bring new technologies such as directional audio and digital labeling to a new set of mini-exhibits scheduled for installation in early FY2010. Additionally, we have begun research into novel ways of digitizing holograms and presenting the resulting information on computer displays and via the web.

Personnel

Two staff members were hired in the fall of 2008 to join the Education and Public Programs team. Dr. Robin Mesiner is the new director of programs, succeeding Beryl Rosenthal. Mesiner has degrees from Brown University and King’s College London and 10 years of experience in developing, studying, and implementing educational experiences in museums. Debora Lui ’03, ’08 is the new programs coordinator, with responsibility for the “Student Late Night” programs that are funded through an internal grant and for expanded adult programs as part of the Public Engagement with Research at MIT initiative.

Volunteers and Interns

The museum has again benefited from the talents and dedication of a diverse group of volunteers and interns. This year 23 individuals ranging from high school students to undergraduates and graduate students to adults transitioning into new career paths have worked with us under the tutelage of 10 museum staff members. They have assisted with processing of collections, delivery of education and public programs, public relations and marketing, and the Museum Store display. Added to this group are the volunteers who worked on our annual Friday After Thanksgiving Chain Reaction and Cambridge Science Festival. We are enormously grateful for the time and effort they have contributed, which has helped us to accomplish important annual goals.

John Durant
Director

More information about the MIT Museum can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/museum/>.