

Copenhagen Innovation Symposium

The Copenhagen Innovation Symposium will extend to Europe a successful event held in Seattle, Washington USA in 2005, 2006, and again in 2008. This series of events bring together invitation-only groups of top thinkers from academia and industry to confront the most important innovation topics of the post-industrial economy of today and tomorrow.

The Copenhagen Innovation Symposium (CIS) is a two-day event that is launched in connection with the Seattle symposium, held in June this year. The idea is that these two events will form into a whole, a trans-Atlantic effort to put innovation challenges on the agenda. The Copenhagen symposium will be held November 10-11th and will be attended by key persons from University of Washington, Seattle. The ambition is to develop these symposia in ways that make possible the utilization of cross-learning opportunities between them, i.e., between the primarily U.S. and Scandinavian-European communities. The vision that unites them is to create an intensified dialogue between research and businesses on the issue of innovation and explore experiences and insights that are of mutual benefits to both parties.

Objective: Establish an ongoing international project intended to foster research, education, and business collaboration on innovation. Ultimately this should lead to accelerating the pace at which new technologies/ideas are created and moved into business commercialization to produce a billion dollar/kroner product and service sectors. We intend to hold symposia in North America and Europe (initially prioritising Scandinavia), with possible extension into Asia and establish an ongoing annual series of events.

Symposium Approach: Our symposium approach aims to extend a multi-discipline innovation research group that first met in the 2005 Seattle symposium. The Seattle event created a network of 100 participants which was extremely productive in seeding discussions about innovations, emerging technologies, and creative business scenarios. In the first year of the Copenhagen event, we expect to attract some 50 people from northern Europe, and to begin an ongoing process of cross-fertilization between the two groups. The symposium philosophy calls for combining practicing company innovators and researchers to work on the biggest, international issues related to innovation.

Institutional anchoring: The Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy (MPP) at Copenhagen Business School is to us a natural context/ground for this exciting symposium as issues of innovation are rapidly becoming multi-disciplinary in nature, calling for that broader socio-historical and philosophical approach that characterizes MPP's management research.

Professors Robert Austin (art of innovation), Daniel Hjorth (entrepreneurship and innovation management), and Mette Mønsted (knowledge management) are all engaged in providing research input to the design of the event.

Generally, what energises the symposium are questions belonging to the challenges of restructuring the old economies' industrial production and organisation into a post-industrial economy where innovation and entrepreneurship (thus creativity) are in focus. To this general challenge belongs the following contextual factors:

- As 2.4 billion citizens of China and India enter the global workforce, how can the developed economies of North America and Europe maintain an innovation edge?
- What should we do to prepare the workers of today and tomorrow for a more innovation intensive future?
- Are there tensions between traditional business objectives (e.g., efficiency) and the need to explore and innovate? How should the tensions be managed?
- Should it in fact be managed, or is management simply one frame for thinking and style of practicing that has to share the organisational stage with other – for the innovative company – equally important mindsets/practices such as entrepreneuring?

More specifically, the Copenhagen event will focus on issues that resonate with the local history and culture in perspective of a global economy. We are therefore focused on particular research questions opening up to multidisciplinary questions and directly emerging from concrete innovation challenges in companies:

- The relationship between design and innovation: Scandinavia in particular is associated with design intensive industries (Bang & Olufsen, IKEA, Ericsson, Nokia), but how can competence in balancing aesthetics, economy, and technology develop into a competitive asset in the global economy?
- What role does the networking of people have in the work of developing innovation-capable organisational forms: are younger people connected in different ways? How do inventors entrepreneurially muster the creation of possibilities that enable innovations to emerge in the market?
- How can ‘teaching innovation’ at Business Schools be part of an increasingly rich dialogue with business around finding new and more sophisticated strategies for competitive advantages in the innovation- and design intensive post-industrial economy?

The dual-symposia idea builds on combining the uniqueness of the two locales as well as binding them together via joint themes. Thus, the questions on ‘networking’ and ‘teaching’ in particular are addressed both in Seattle and Copenhagen.

The organising committee for these events include:

Professor Robert Austin, Harvard Business School and Copenhagen Business School

Professor Daniel Hjorth, Copenhagen Business School

Professor Ed Lazowska, Computer Science, University of Washington

Professor Bob Mason, The Information School of the University of Washington

Professor Mette Mønsted, Copenhagen Business School

Professor Dick Nolan, Harvard Business School and Washington University