

NOAA Science On a Sphere®

Science On a Sphere® (SOS) was developed by researchers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as a visualization tool to help illustrate Earth System science to people of all ages and education. Using an external projection system, data sets are projected onto a six foot sphere, creating a captivating animated globe. The result is a unique and intuitive educational platform that can show real-time weather, planets, moons, tsunamis, climate models, and is only limited by the imagination.

“Brings science to life!”



The NOAA Office of Education and the Institute for Learning Innovation conducted a cross-site summative evaluation of Science On a Sphere®. Here are a few key results.

- 71% of participants responded that they had learned something new from seeing SOS and were able to provide specific examples of what they had learned.
- 82% of respondents said yes, seeing information displayed on SOS changed their understanding of the information.
- Those who had seen SOS before were just as likely as those who had not to report that they had learned something new.

SOS Milestones

- First public SOS installation – 2004
- Patent Awarded to NOAA for SOS – 2005
- NOAA began offering grants for SOS installations – 2005
- Installation at Museum of Science and Industry - 2007
- First international SOS installation in Taiwan – 2008
- First installation in the People’s Republic of China – 2010
- SOS Remote App for iOS devices released – 2011
- First Southern Hemisphere installation in Brazil – 2012
- 100th SOS installation worldwide – Summer 2013

Science On a Sphere® can be found in over 100 locations world-wide, in facilities such as:

- Science Museums
- Visitor Centers
- Research Laboratories
- Universities
- Aquariums
- Zoos

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“Excellent, easily understood visuals”

