

## Why should you attend the Singapore symposium?

So you think you can't afford to come to Singapore for the International Symposium because your employer won't fund the trip. Perhaps you need to apply some systems thinking and view the situation from another perspective like 'can you afford NOT to come?'

Consider some of the issues. The obvious one is the cost. Take a lifecycle perspective. First of all the costs are probably tax deductible. This means that depending on your tax bracket, up to 40% of the costs are covered by your tax claim. Then, are you thinking of purchasing new clothes in the near future. Expect to pay between one third and one half in Singapore for equivalent or better quality. Do you need a new or replacement pair of eye glasses? Expect to pay between one third and one half in Singapore for equivalent or better quality. These two purchases and the tax deduction could cover most of the costs of coming to the International Symposium. Talk to your supervisor; ask for the time and part of the expenses. A willingness to pick up some of the costs will make an impression. You don't have to tell them how you plan to make up the rest of the costs.



Singapore does not need to be an expensive place to stay. There are a number of lower cost hotels near the convention centre and the nearby food courts provide inexpensive meals with menus from all parts of Asia as well as western food with an Asian touch. There are even some food courts, yes more than one, inside the convention centre. They are safe to eat at for westerners. I've been eating in them for six months with no problems. You can eat well for \$10 to \$20 (Singapore dollars) a day at the food courts. However, alcohol is one of the few expensive things in Singapore.

If you want wine with your food you'll probably have to eat at a more expensive restaurant and expect to pay at least double your local prices for the drinks. If you want a stronger drink later in the evening then you might want to consider the do it yourself duty free option. There is even a duty free shop in the airport arrival hall for your convenience.



Still not convinced? What about the intangibles? What about the knowledge you will acquire and the people you will meet and network with in Singapore? There are a few ground breaking papers on the program. Can you afford to miss them and what is more to the point, miss the opportunity to discuss them with the speakers? The keynote speakers this year should be interesting rather than providing an opportunity to catch up on your jet lag. The Host Committee is arranging for special networking icebreaking identification to place on your name badge to help you identify people with similar interests. Getting to know people and working together in the special interests groups is a great way of

becoming known in the field and when the jobs come back, knowing people increases the probability of being hired for the job you want. When I first started going to INCOSE's symposia I generally met people with similar interests sharing the taxi on the way to the airport after the symposium. The icebreaker identifications will help speed up the networking process.



How committed are you to systems engineering? Aren't you concerned about the Seldon Crisis facing Systems Engineering? Systems engineering as you know it may not exist in one to five years. Is that good or bad and why? You need to come to the symposium and hear the issues discussed in the academic forum and talk to the key people during the networking time. Not sure what the crisis is all about, well ask me to give your chapter a remote presentation on the topic and enlighten you. Those of you who have heard my Leverhulme Lecture on "Systems engineers – the wizards of modern society" (see [http://therightrequirement.com/ll/leverhulme\\_lectures.htm](http://therightrequirement.com/ll/leverhulme_lectures.htm)) or other speakers and

Webinars know how well the distance mode presentation can work.

If you are seriously committed to systems engineering, then you need to be here and more importantly to be seen to be here. Several years ago I asked the exhibitors at the Australian Systems Engineering, Test and Evaluation (SETE) Conference why they exhibited given that very little business was being done. The general response was that they were there to show that they were still in business. Should you not be doing the same? Yes the recession is hurting, but it will end eventually. The complex problems facing society needing the systems approach to provide solutions will not go away on their own. Sooner or later people who can perform the activities known as systems engineering will be hired. You need to be seen as having a commitment to both systems engineering and improving your mastery of the discipline and what better way to separate you from the herd than by being at the symposium in Singapore. I'll ask the host committee to provide each delegate with a Merlion lapel pin that you can proudly wear on your name badge at future symposia to signify that you were at the Singapore Symposium.



There are still a few people kicking themselves for missing the symposium in Australia in 2001. Singapore promises to be even better. The Asia Pacific Systems Engineering Conference (APCOSE) is collocated with the Symposium. Your registration gets you into both events. Do you really want to miss the opportunity to meet your counterparts from the East and discover the similarities and differences for yourself? Globalisation means that you are going to be working with overseas counterparts sooner or later. Knowing people personally can make a difference to your career. This is the opportunity to meet systems engineers from the Asia-Pacific region in person and start to build friendships. As Region VI representative to the INCOSE Member Board, I met wonderful and interesting people. I count myself fortunate to know them. Let me introduce them to you, and then have them introduce you to people they know who share similar interests. Can you really afford to miss this opportunity?



Lastly, much of the success of Singapore can be attributed to systems engineering. There is a great deal of interest in systems engineering education. If you have experience that you are willing to share either by teaching (courses or by being a guest speaker on someone else's course) or by having your experience documented in the form of a case study, come to Singapore a day early and meet some of the academics and staff at the Temasek Defense Systems Institute at the National University of Singapore to start to build a relationship and discuss how we can work together. Technology has broken the distance barrier (we need to work on the time barrier, linking to a class over the Internet at 0330 your local time sucks!).

Singapore is also well placed for a vacation in South East Asia. There are a number of low cost airlines that fly from Singapore to neighbouring countries. You can look up tours from Singapore on the internet or check with the tour provider arranged by the Host committee at [www.luxury.com.sg/incose.html](http://www.luxury.com.sg/incose.html). Asia is externally different from the Anglo-Saxon and European worlds in so many ways. The sights and aromas are strange and exciting. Why not plan an extended vacation as part of the Singapore experience? As the TV commercials for a well known credit card state – the card can be used for certain expenses, but there are others that are priceless. Coming to Singapore for the symposium and leveraging on the experience is priceless and how well you do it will demonstrate your ability as a systems engineer.

Feel free to contact me via Skype, email or phone if you have any questions or need some written support.

Lower the cost even more by taking advantage of the early bird registration rate reduction. See you in Singapore at the symposium [www.incose.org/symp2009/](http://www.incose.org/symp2009/)

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