So you want to build a planetarium?

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BIOGRAPHIES
Torvald Hessel graduated with a Masters in Astrophysics from the University in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. During this time, he worked at the Artis Planetarium as a presenter and educator. In 1999 Hessel emigrated to the United States, and in 2003 founded the “Austin Planetarium” a not for profit in Austin Texas, which had as goal to establish Austin’s first Planetarium. After coming close to success several times, finally in March 2015 the organization opened a museum facility in a leased building of 3000 sq. m. and changed its name to the “Texas Museum of Science & Technology” (TXMOST). In February 2018, Hessel resigned from the museum. The museum was closed six weeks later.

Currently Hessel is looking for new opportunities, hopefully in the same field of informal science education.

ABSTRACT
The opening exhibit was BODY WORLDS, and in November of the same year a 10-meter planetarium dome was added. The museum attracted 60,000 visitors in its first year. Over the three years since opening, the museum was slowly upgraded with each exhibit swap, and after three years the museum reached capacity, at which point the museum board decided to close down the museum.

So, what happened? Why did this project fail? Could this have been prevented? In this talk we will discuss these issues, and hopefully can offer useful “lessons learned” to the audience.

INTRODUCTION
Introduction of speaker and bio

I. SECTION I
Brief overview of the TXMOST project and timeline

II. SECTION II
II.1 Analysis of what went wrong and why the board closed the museum

II.2 Discussion of what could/should have been done differently, possibly preventing the museum closure

II.3 Future dreams?

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REFERENCES
NA