



Museum Development North West

Knowing Your Audiences



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Foreword

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In an increasingly competitive world it is important for museums to understand who their current audiences are and how to engage with them both physically and virtually. It is also important for them to understand who their *potential* audiences are, why they aren't visiting, and what might motivate them to engage with the organisation. A clear understanding of who you wish to engage with and why, based on sound evidence, is critical to ensuring long-term resilience and future sustainability.

This epublication provides practical information on how to collect audience data and how to interpret it. It aims to explore how organisations can gain insight into their audiences, actual and potential, physical and virtual, and how this understanding can be applied to engage new audiences and ensure they have the best possible experience.



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Introduction

This document is intended primarily for museums without specialist marketing or audience development staff and acts as a basic introduction to the subject with signposts to further reading and resources. It is not a replacement for expert advice or consultancy but aims to encourage self-evaluation and simple, practical, everyday solutions. The case studies are of museums in the North West who have incorporated audience development into their approach and found it useful and effective.

The document is also a record of the excellent work carried out by museums using the Viewpoint (formerly Standpoint) system and the ultimate benefits it has had for the visitors, customers and users of the North West's museums.

A good way to approach the document might be to carry out the self-evaluation on page 12 as a team exercise (however large or small your team!), then follow up with free text analysis using the model on page 25 (both exercises have been designed to be printed off and used) and finally access the information and links on audience development planning. Deciding on one or two simple but immediate actions can be an effective way of making progress.

Museum Development North West is very grateful to those museums, partners and organisations whose experience is highlighted here.

In the spirit of feedback and evaluation, MDNW would love to hear from you if you have an experience or an idea to share. Contact details and further resources are on our blog <https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com>.

1.1 Why research your audience?

This may seem like a very basic question, most museums would say that they have an idea who their visitors are. However it is by no means universal for a museum to know exactly who comes, their demographic and social profile, their motivations for visiting, their experiences whilst in the museum, their likelihood to come again and the possibility that they will recommend the museum to their friends and family.

These "Audience Basics" allow the museum to understand and shape its core purpose. They should influence everything from the food in the café to the objects on display.

Go further by engaging with your customers, finding out what they are feeling in your museum and how you might improve that experience.

Audience engagement gives:

Clarity of vision

- Clarifying your core purpose and seeing yourself as your customers see you helps support your business model

Customer friendliness

- Engaging with and responding to your customers – understanding that their experience is key
- Meeting expectations - people expect that all organisations will be customer focused and responsive; it is a minimum standard that museums ignore at their peril
- Developing your customers as your advocates and collaborators

Resilience

- Funders will require you to have knowledge of your current audience and how your bid might allow you to develop new audiences
- Staying relevant and ahead in tough times – understanding changes in the sector and in your market

The value of audience research for the museum

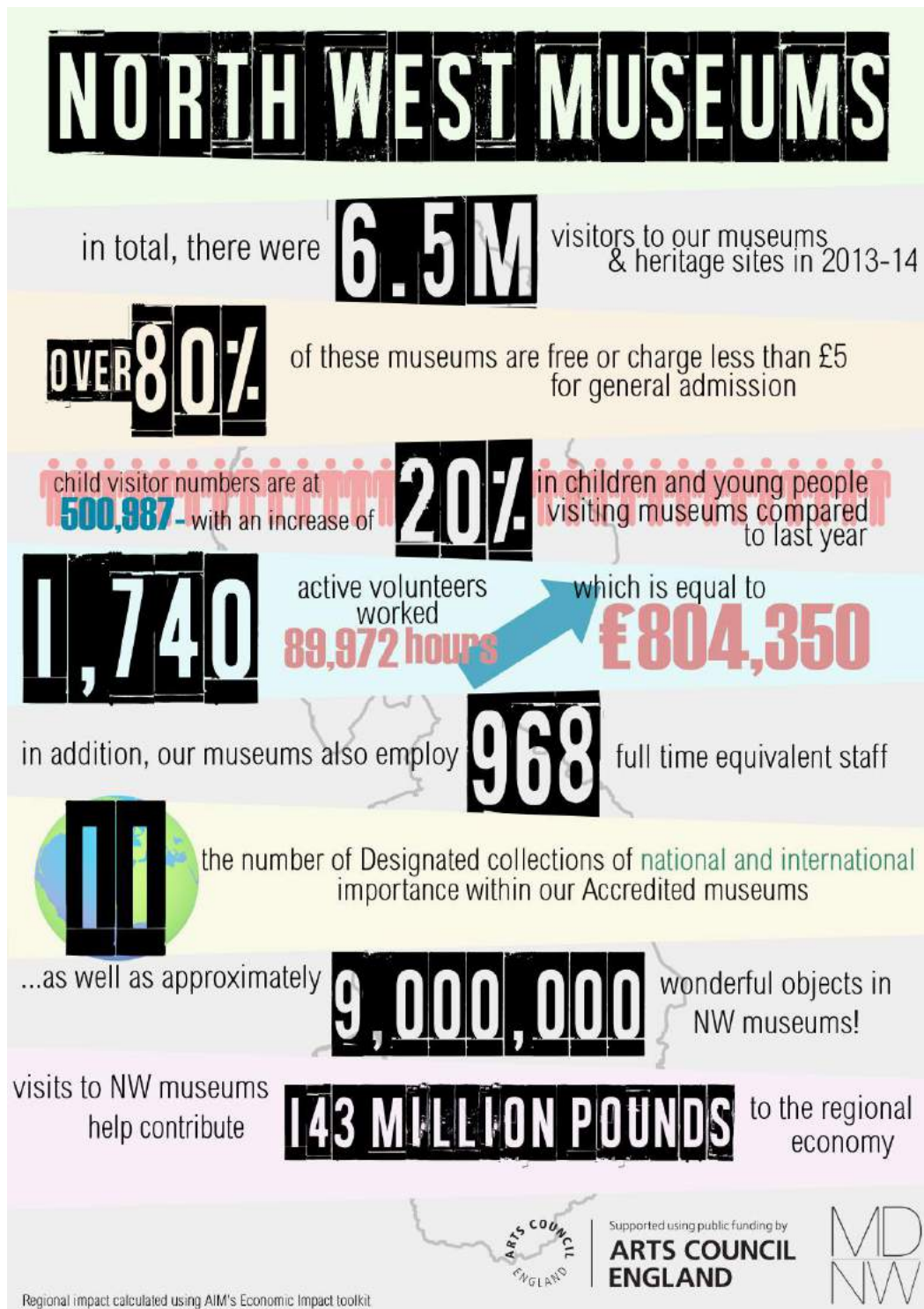
AIM (Association of Independent Museums) has defined the hallmarks of a prospering museum which make a clear link between a museum's resilience and having a focus upon visitors (see below and at www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/aim_hallmarks/).

"A prospering museum actively seeks to understand its visitors, customers and supporters, and responds to the needs it identifies, when delivering the organisation's Purpose. It continually measures its quality and its success in delivering a first class visitor experience, and seeks to adapt whenever necessary." AIM, *Hallmarks of Prospering Museums*, 2015



The value of audience research for the sector

The infographic below was based on the data supplied by museums to MDNW's regional benchmarking survey, carried out in 2014. Much of the data provided is based on audience research data collected by individual museums. Collectively the results give an excellent picture of the impact the sector has in the North West - a very useful tool both to advocate for museums and to inform the services MDNW provides.



1.2 Funders and audience research

Arts Council England

ACE places a high importance on audience development and marketing. They use the following definition:

“The term audience development describes activity which is undertaken specifically to meet the needs of existing and potential audiences and to help arts organisations to develop ongoing relationships with audiences. It can include aspects of marketing, commissioning, programming, education, customer care and distribution.” Arts Council England, Accreditation Guidance Section 3: Users and their Experiences, June 2014

“Audience” includes attendees, visitors, readers, listeners, viewers, participants, learners and people who purchase works of art.

ACE generates its own information on audience research and development, such as this information sheet on audience development and marketing - www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Audience_development_and_marketing_Feb_2015.pdf.

ACE also funds and develops new evaluation systems, such as the Culture Metrics (see page 18).

Gathering and presenting data about current audiences and future target audiences is a requirement of applying for ACE grants (e.g. Grants for the Arts) - www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/GFTA_how_to_apply_under_15k_word_copy_July2015.pdf.

Meeting defined standards in audience research is also a requirement of Accreditation - www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/guidance-documents/.

Finally, an excellent ACE funded document from 2011 makes clear the link between audience focus and successful business models - www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Final_business_models.pdf.

Other major funders

Heritage Lottery Fund

Requires that all its grant applicants have carried out some form of consultation or engagement with the target audience for the project and can demonstrate that in the application -

www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/our-heritage.

Big Lottery Fund

Gives detailed guidance on evidencing need by consultation and engagement -

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/applying-for-funding/identifying-need/evidencing-need.

Trusts and foundations

A guide to the main grant giving organisations are listed in an MDNW funding guide <https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com/funding-sources/>.

The majority of these require that applicants have some form of user, visitor or audience data – both current and planned, such as:

- The museum's current audiences – profile, visiting patterns and the need that they have expressed or demonstrated for the project that is the subject of the grant bid
- Consultation with current and potential audiences about the specific project
- Clarity about target audiences and audience development which the museum expects as a result of the project

This applies even to collections related grants, such as the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, administered by the Museums Association; one of its funding criteria is how the work involves, engages and/or impacts on audiences.

Most trusts and foundations, for example the Foyle Foundation, require you to be able to demonstrate that your project will make an impact on people's lives – and to be able to clearly identify who those people are.

Most funders are not prescriptive about how you gather your audience data but there are some basic characteristics, which any good audience research system should deliver:

- A user-friendly data collection method
- In scale with the size of your organisation
- Delivers data that you can readily access and use
- Reasonable cost
- Credible results

Museums should shop around, experiment and combine systems to find what works for them.



2.1 What data should you gather?

A good level of basic data should include:

- Basic demographics (age, gender, where from - ideally postcode, type of group – family, friends, organised visit)
- Motivation for visiting/how they heard about the museum
- Visit pattern – first time or repeat
- What they thought of it and likelihood to recommend or return

Segmentation and profiling

Audience profiling is a way of analysing audience data by creating categories of customers. These categories are based on demographics and consumer characteristics. People may be categorised by their age, their interests, the amount they engage with the arts, their hobbies and pastimes and their interactions with media. Shorthand titles are used to summarise each segment (according to which segmentation model you are using, older, affluent couples could be “Dormitory Dependables”, “Mature Explorers”, “Yesterday’s Captains” or “Affluent Greys”).

These segments can then be cross-referenced against a background population so that the profile of your current audience to the population within your catchment area is compared with the profile of the local and national population (the potential audience). This allows you to target promotion, marketing and activities to attract a particular segment.

Some examples of audience profile systems are:

- ACORN (developed by CACI) and MOSAIC (developed by Experian) – both are geo-demographic segmentation models based on life stage and lifestyle
- Audience Spectrum - based on people's engagement with art, culture and heritage, recently developed by the Audience Agency to replace Arts Audiences: Insight. Also geo-locatable like ACORN and MOSAIC
- Arts Audiences: Insight - based on arts engagement, developed by Arts Council England, recently replaced by Audience Spectrum

2.2 Self-evaluation checklist

Use this checklist, ideally as a team, to see where you need to improve your audience data – you could also refer to Section 3 of Accreditation.

1. Basic data collection

Which of these do we use (tick all that apply)?

Clicker, or other manual system to record visitor numbers	
Viewpoint device	
Visitor Verdict	
Audience Finder	
Another data system - describe	

How often do we collect audience data (tick one)?

Continuously	
2-3 times a year	
Once a year	
Every couple of years	
When we can	

2. From the data we collect, what do we know about our audiences?

Frequency of visits

First time	
More than once	
Regulars (2+ times a year)	

Where do they come from?

Postcode	
Other info	

Why do they come?

General ideas	
Spectrum/Insight profiles	
Visitor Verdict profiles	
Viewpoint data	

How do we find out who isn't coming?

--

Why aren't they coming?

--

3. How do we get feedback from our audiences (tick all that apply)?

Visitor book/comments book	
Post-it notes or graffiti wall	
Cards, voting bowls or similar interactives	
Capture verbal comments made to staff or volunteers	
Evaluation forms	
Focus groups	
Social media - describe	
Other - describe	

From this feedback, what do our visitors think about the museum?

Likes	Dislikes
Wants	Likely to recommend?

4. Action checklist

Action	How	When
Feed audience data into our Forward Plan/mission/values		
Use audience data in our funding bids		
Share audience feedback with our staff and volunteers		
Share audience data and feedback with our trustees and stakeholders		
Share audience feedback on social media		
Use feedback for advocacy		
Act on what people say		
Tell them what we did		
Have an Audience Development Plan		

2.3 Audience research systems

These can be as diverse and low tech as a clicker or visitor book and as high tech as an app or touch screen. Many museums combine one or more of these audience research systems, to suit their budgets, resources and staffing, giving them a range of cost effective and useable tools. This is a summary comparison of some of the most common systems. More information can be found in the "Links and contacts" section (data correct as of December 2015).

Viewpoint	Visitor/Audience Finder	Visitor Verdict
CRT/MDNW	Audience Agency	AIM
Data collection		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Self complete using touch screen in museum ❖ No minimum but less than 100 responses is poor ❖ Staff training needed ❖ Has high levels of return because is own choice to complete ❖ Not demographically balanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Face to face surveys done throughout the year (or collect emails for follow up surveys) ❖ Use paper survey or tablet to instantly upload to dashboard ❖ Can use a range of staff to collect surveys ❖ Supporting information and helpline provided, training available ❖ Aim for 380 surveys per year for representative sample and credible results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Museum collects email addresses from visitors ❖ Support includes online videos as well as downloadable documents ❖ Staff training needed ❖ No minimum but 25 successful surveys is recommended ❖ Given the usual take-up rate, this means 100 email addresses minimum
Data access		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anytime, online platform ❖ Can be downloaded using Excel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anytime, online via interactive dashboard ❖ Own results can be benchmarked with other participants and regional and national data ❖ Range of paid for options e.g. bespoke benchmarking groups or extra survey questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anytime, online, including access to real time benchmarking with other participants (currently used by 80 museums) ❖ Can benchmark by sector, segment, and type/size

Cost		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ North West Accredited museums receive hardware and license free from MDNW and only have to pay maintenance ❖ Usual cost would be £1,500 per museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Free for basic survey and results via dashboard ❖ Costs from £100 per year per extra question theme ❖ £500 per year for enhanced dashboard ❖ Works well for consortia - £100 per museum for joint benchmark ❖ Extras can be arranged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ AIM members' discount = £240 for smallest museums; £390 for museums with more than 20,000 visitors; £650 for 50,000 – 100,000 visitors; £1,250 for museums with more than 100,000 visitors
Range of data provided		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Whatever you programme in e.g. demographics, motivation, satisfaction ratings, likelihood to recommend, responses to individual exhibitions ❖ MDNW regional benchmarking questions (on demographics, motivation and visit pattern) are collated regionally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Free survey provides demographics, attendance patterns, motivations and ratings ❖ Heat mapping and Audience Spectrum provided free once 380 surveys have been collected ❖ Results can be compared against a choice of benchmarks ❖ Regional overview of cultural engagement freely available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Four key areas – demographics, motivations, behaviour, opinions ❖ Uses own definitions of segments. There are seven types, not related to any other system but simple to use and museum specific
Status and compatibility for external bodies and funders		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Good data to inform all kinds of funding bids, including MDNW, HLF, ACE ❖ Can be linked with Insight profiles ❖ 79 devices across the North West ❖ Good for longitudinal data (i.e. data gathered over time, allowing you to track changes and impact) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Compatible with ACE funding streams and thinking ❖ Used across artforms ❖ Uses Audience Spectrum segmentation for profiling – a shared language with the sector ❖ 150 museum users nationally; 20 in the North West 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Good data to inform funding bids ❖ Uses own segmentation based on museum experiences ❖ 100+ members across the UK ❖ 11 members in the North West ❖ Good for events and exhibitions

Contact		
CRT Ltd www.crtviewpoint.com	The Audience Agency www.theaudienceagency.org/contact www.audiencefinder.org/about/	AIM/BDRC www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/aim_visitor_verdict/
MDNW museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com		

Other systems

Culture Metrics

Metrics are a collaboratively devised system of measurements of quality, engagement, reach and resilience; a framework for the sector to use to measure impact. Two pilot studies to date have focused on Goal 1 (Excellence) and Goal 5 (Children and Young People). Used by Major Partner Museums, supported by ACE.

SurveyMonkey

The Basic (free) level allows you to generate surveys, email them to respondents using a link, collect and analyse data online; the charged model (from £26 per month at time of writing) allows export to Excel, pdf, pie charts etc. See also Google Forms, Smartsurvey, Netigate and many others.

Market research

Commissioned surveys carried out by external bodies, including focus groups, online questionnaires, vox pops etc. It can be costly but can give museums a detailed and credible picture to inform funding and planning. This could then be supplemented by more everyday methods that the museum's staff or volunteers can carry out.

Paper surveys

Advantages	Disadvantages
Free, quick, good for events and exhibitions	Limited benefit unless kept up and followed through
Customise for different audiences	No external benchmarking
Analyse using taxonomy	Need training - results can be affected

Gift Aid

Postcode data gathered for Gift Aid purposes can be a good snapshot. It offers a way of finding out where at least some of the museum's visitors originate.

2.4 Viewpoint: MDNW's regional audience data collection programme

Viewpoint is a touch screen data collection programme, which works by capturing audience feedback and information in situ. The system is produced and supported by CRT (Customer Research Technology Limited), www.crtviewpoint.com.

Viewpoint (originally known as Standpoint) came to museums in the North West under the funding and support of Renaissance North West in 2008. Renaissance funded the purchase, installation and licensing of machines in 36 museums across the region. At that time, it was the largest audience research consortium for museums in the UK, incorporating a commercial ICT partner into the mix.

The value of audience data generated and shared through the programme is clearly evident in the conservation, care and use of collections amongst participating venues as well as in informing many regional cross-cultural programmes. Viewpoint has played a key role in:

- Informing the development of the new £1.4m history gallery development, Discover Preston, at the Harris Museum & Art Gallery
- Informing a new pricing strategy and the development of the retail outlets at Lakeland Arts venues
- Evaluating Stockport's Heritage Lottery funded Hands on Heritage four year community engagement programme
- Informing Arts Council England's North West's Arts Engagement Programme involving Oldham, St Helens, Blackpool and Copeland and Allerdale local authorities
- Exploring and demonstrating audience engagement, crossover and potential amongst arts, heritage and library users in Wigan
- Informing the Quays Partnership Cultural Strategy baseline research

In the last three years MDNW has rolled out the programme to the extent that 79 machines are currently deployed and generating live audience data.

It is important to MDNW that museums take charge of collecting their own visitor data and applying it for their own use. The Viewpoint system has provided a valuable boost to the sustainability of museums by giving feedback, demographics and valuable audience profiling to support museums in their planning, programming and fundraising.

How Viewpoint is used

The touch screen is mounted in a kiosk or stand, or placed on a table. Visitors engage with the museum and complete surveys written by the museum using the touch screen prompts. The familiarity of the touch screen and the sense of privacy and anonymity encourage people to use it.



The system has inbuilt quarantining of surveys which are incomplete, but the museum has the facility to revisit these and reinstate them if it deems them valid.

Surveys are customisable, with a range of graphics that can be applied to buttons, pages and headings, including the museum's own logo or that of its network.

Positioning of the device is important, it needs to be far enough into the museum for the user to have seen displays and be in a position to comment, near enough to staff for help to be given, and self-contained enough for users not to feel overlooked. Some museums get good results by putting it in a shop area or near the exit.

Museums have experimented very successfully with branding their Viewpoint machines, linking this with a cluster wide approach to marketing and sharing audiences (see case studies).

Benefits

CRT notes on its blog that the immediacy of the touch screen experience when the customer is “in the moment” has a particular value. They identify an increasing disengagement with online surveys which may mean that high numbers of email addresses have to be collected to give a workable data set.

“A survey at the point of service interaction is not a “reflective survey”. Think about it - a reflective survey looks back at the “history” of an interaction. A survey during the interaction explores what's happening “now”. It's a completely different approach. This is the place where Gartner claim that feedback is 40% more accurate - right at the customer's point-of-experience.’” *Simon Rowland - 5 keys for effective touch screen surveys, CRT blog*

www.crtviewpoint.com/Articles/5-Keys-For-Effective-Touch-Screen-Surveys

Costs

Viewpoint is currently free to Accredited museums in the North West, having been funded by Renaissance North West and Museum Development funding. MDNW covers the cost of the licence and the hardware is provided. If museums had to pay, current costs would be around £1,500 for a kiosk device and licence.

Support for Viewpoint users

MDNW has established a network of “superusers” for Viewpoint; staff who work in museums in the region who have experience and confidence in using the system and kindly offer their help to other museums. Contact details for these superusers can be obtained from MDNW.

MDNW runs annual Viewpoint basics training, delivered by CRT staff, which is free to museums that have a device.

There are also a number of Viewpoint user guides freely downloadable from the blog here -

<https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com/publications/>

Finally, CRT's own helpdesk is the first point of contact for technical queries -

www.crtviewpoint.com, 024 7660 8833, customerservice@crtviewpoint.com.

In summary

Viewpoint enables museums to collect valuable audience data that:

- Supports regional and cluster benchmarking and marketing
- Can ask customised questions that are easy to ask and understand
- Allow questions to be targeted to different audiences
- Is useful for clusters where a network use the same questions
- Is useful for analysing audience data
- Identifies audience trends
- Has strength in its 'anonymity'
- Can be significant for applying for external funding
- Can be used for advocacy
- Can signpost people to other heritage organisations within a cluster
- Is cheaper than other forms of market research

2.5 Survey design - hints & tips

Be clear about what you really need to know. Many surveys fail because of the “captive audience” approach. Don't ask questions if you don't strictly need, or won't use, the answers

Save extended questions for face-to-face interviews or focus groups

Remember changing concentration levels. If the survey is on a touch screen, people won't answer 28 questions over 10 minutes, aim for 12 questions over five minutes

If it is a self-complete paper survey, aim to keep it to one side of A4 and three to four questions. Say “thank you” and tell the responder how the information will be used to improve what you do

For a facilitated survey delivered by your staff or volunteers, you should aim for about five minutes and eight to 10 questions (NB professional market research companies do use surveys which are longer, but are experienced in managing the process to get maximum participation)

It's great to get staff at all levels and roles in the museum involved in your survey work, so that they can “hear it like it is” from the visitors

Your survey should have “logic”. Early questions should establish demographics, be non-threatening and lead logically into deeper information and opinions

Questions should be unbiased. Watch out for hidden assumptions, e.g. in rating scales that don't allow for a “don't agree” or “didn't enjoy” option

Don't use two part questions e.g. “what did you think of the exhibition and why?” – they are confusing to answer and hard to analyse

Don't overuse rating scales – one or two per survey maximum

Use open-ended or free text questions only when you really want detailed opinion and in-depth feedback

Pilot your survey with friends, family and colleagues before using it to check people's understanding of the questions and the user friendliness of the structure and layout



Analysis software is available for processing surveys and free text but can be expensive (e.g. £775 from one company for a one site licence). Links to these are in the "Links and contacts" section

Use simple taxonomies to analyse free text, post-it note comments and visitor books (see example on the next page)

Results can be tracked on a free programme such as Excel

Feed back in your turn – tell people publicly what you did as a result of their comments; send reports or transcripts if you have promised it; it's better to have an ongoing conversation rather than a major research project that happens only once

2.6 EXERCISE: Analysing free text survey responses in an imaginary museum

This is a very simple example based on three responses to the same question. This approach can also be applied to visitor books, post-its or card feedback systems.

The imaginary museum is surveying visitors to a new exhibition on Victorian Life, which includes a number of interactives and a reconstructed cottage.

Without stretching credibility, look through the responses for repetitions of the same phrases or concepts and highlight them. This should give you some keywords which you can then track through all the responses. In this case the following categories have been identified:

This identifies hands on/ interactivity **This** identifies specific activities

This identifies sensory experiences **This** identifies learning/cognitive experiences

Response 1

What did you enjoy most about the exhibition?

The children loved being able to be **hands on**, especially **dressing up**, the **touch screen** and the **puzzle game**. The adults enjoyed the **old photographs** and **being able to go into the cottage**.

Response 2

What did you enjoy most about the exhibition?

Lifting the lids on the **smelly boxes** and **smelling the coal** and the **cooking**. **Looking at how they used to live**. Being able to **go into the cottage**.

Response 3

What did you enjoy most about the exhibition?

Going into the house and being able to **touch things**. **Learning about the old days**.

Analysis

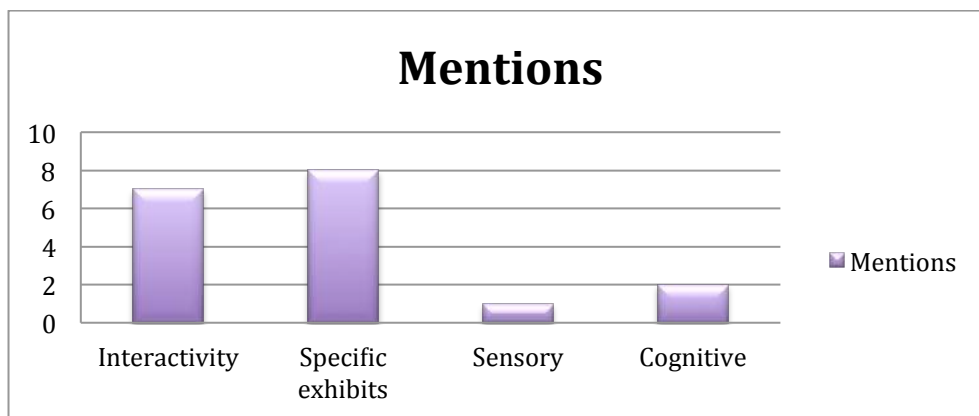
7 mentions of **hands on/interactivity**

8 mentions of **specific activities**, of which 3 focus on the cottage

1 mention of a **sensory experience**

2 mentions of **cognitive experiences**, both of learning about past lives

Data plotted in Excel.



Conclusions

Visitors in this survey can remember specific activities and exhibits very clearly, suggesting a strong emotional connection or enjoyment. They value the interactivity of the exhibition. They express a sense of freedom and empowerment in “being able” to interact with the exhibits.

The cottage display is the most mentioned single exhibit. The children's interactives are equally popular, with equal emphasis on the touch screen and on the non-technological interactives. Fewer visitors mentioned the sensory experience than the learning, but the cottage display clearly combines both successfully. People want experiential information about life in the past.

Recommendations

The museum should:

- Design accessible displays that the public can engage with (more walk in displays and reconstructions)
- Provide supplementary information on touch screen, in photographs, booklets, or audio to cater for a deeper interest
- Include sensory experiences

3.1 Gawthorpe Textile Collection

Using audience data to target collections

Gawthorpe Textile Collection is housed in Gawthorpe Hall in east Lancashire. It is an outstanding textile collection compiled by Miss Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth between 1912 and the 1960s and reflects her passionate interest in all types of textile craft and production. GTC has a close relationship with its audiences, hosting events, workshops, and craft collaborations with artists and the community.

Gawthorpe uses a Viewpoint terminal and analyses data using the Arts Council's Arts Audiences: Insight profiling. This showed:

- A high proportion of first time visitors (76%), with few repeat visitors
- Visitors from a significant drive time (80% of visitors travelling up to 75 minutes), comparatively few local visitors
- A high proportion (31%) of the "Fun fashion and friends" audience segment. The textile collection and patchwork and quilting in particular have the potential to appeal to even more of these young adults
- 26% "Dinner and a show" audience segment (mainstream group of young and middle-aged people with disposable income to spend on leisure activities)

Supported by a grant from MDNW, GTC carried out a collection review and storage project focusing on two of the most popular collections, patchwork and quilting/whitework. The project has led to much improved care and access to these collections and more opportunities to use them for public access and audience development.

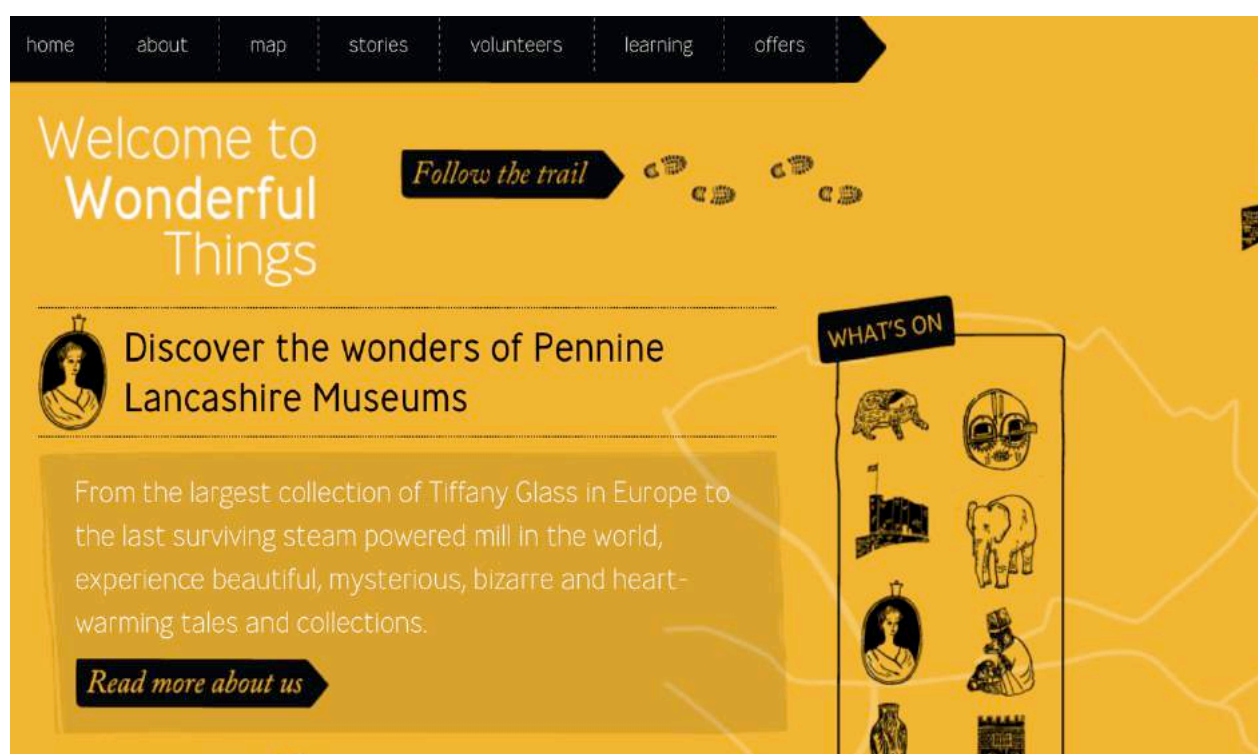
www.gawthorpetextiles.org.uk/about



3.2 Pennine Lancashire Museums

Who are our collective audiences?

There are nine museums that make up the Pennine Lancashire consortium. Housed in a variety of historic houses, civic buildings and textile mills, the museums wanted to collaborate to share and develop audiences. Using the theme of “Shared Stories – Money Made; Money Spent” the consortium bid successfully to the Arts Council for development funds to market the group of museums as a consortium, to share and develop audiences and to create a strong online presence which reinforces the Pennine Lancashire “brand” and showcases the collections.



Viewpoint data from across the consortium was used to:

- Support the case for funding, PLM received major grant awards
- Underpin the brand development – which is now reflected in the branded Viewpoint machines in each venue
- Be part of the “passport” scheme by which visitors move from one venue to another, using a leaflet that records their visit

www.wonderful-things.org.uk

3.3 Cumbria Museum Consortium

Using two systems for deeper results

Cumbria Museum Consortium is comprised of Lakeland Arts, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery and the Wordsworth Trust. They are funded as Major Partner Museums and co-manage Museum Development North West.

CMC uses Viewpoint to inform:

- Marketing for individual sites
- Planning and development for the Consortium

In 2015-16, CMC is combining Viewpoint with the Audience Agency's Audience Finder programme. Viewpoint kiosks capture visitors' immediate responses, whilst staff carry out in person exit surveys.

The aim is to give two parallel strands of results - those from a selected audience and those volunteered by people who choose to use the touch screen.

The Consortium has also got staff at all levels across the organisation involved in talking to the public to gather feedback for Audience Finder. This has had a positive organisational impact, with senior managers and non-front of house staff being able to engage with visitors. Early results indicate that visitors are more frank and critical using Viewpoint than in interviews face-to-face: this is very helpful in feeding results into planning.

<http://cumbriamuseums.org.uk>

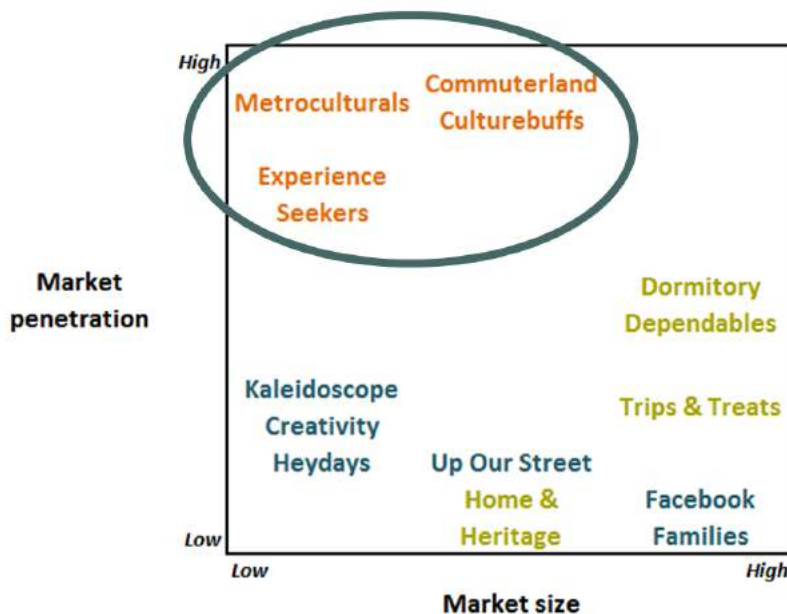


3.4 The HiDDEN network

Using Audience Spectrum

HiDDEN consists of eight small museums and cultural institutions in Manchester and Salford. They wanted to develop a strategic identity based on audience reactions and data. They found that the network was using a wide range of audience data collection methods, ranging from simple collecting of visitor numbers, to feedback questionnaires and online systems. Most partners were struggling to interpret data, and there was a lack of benchmarking data across the network as a whole.

Funded by MDNW, the network installed Viewpoint in all venues and devised a standardised questionnaire. Using Audience Spectrum, their findings showed three key audience segments amongst which crossover between venues could be encouraged – “Metroculturals”, “Experience Seekers” and “Commuterland Culturebuffs”.



This knowledge subsequently informed:

- The development of a new name, brand identity and marketing campaign
- A social media presence and leaflet promoting joint visits to all eight venues
- Branded Viewpoint machines

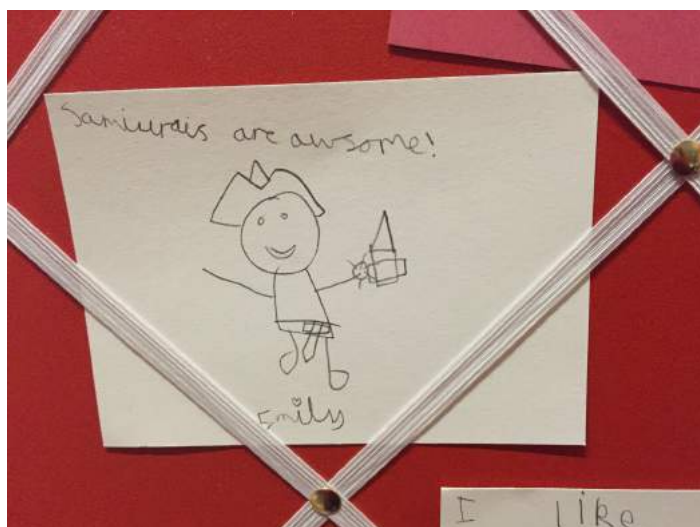
For further information on the visitor research undertaken by HiDDEN see www.theaudienceagency.org/insight/manchester-small-museums-and-archives-network.
www.thehidden8.com

4.1 Consultation and feedback

These are just a sample of simple and low cost methods to consult and feedback to your visitors.

Post-it notes or graffiti walls

- Make a space in the gallery for a noticeboard or tree (for postcard “leaves”), and invite comments. Be creative with the shape and format
- Periodically analyse these using the taxonomic approach shown on page 25. This approach can be adapted to fit your museum or exhibition
- **Must do** - analyse regularly. Capture feedback and reactions and use on social media and in marketing; pick up any design, visitor comfort or access issues
- **Ideally** - clear and date regularly; track changes and trends. Use it to feed into your planning



Visitor books

- If this is the only thing you do, try to select one with space for postcodes and as much comment space as possible
- **Must do** - place the book in a non-sensitive area – people will not be frank under the eye of the receptionist! Capture at least some data about where people come from and what they think
- **Ideally** - periodically, analyse them using the taxonomic approach described on page 25

Voting

- Use bowls with scales or topics on them and ask visitors to vote for their favourite or record their views by putting pebbles, fabric shapes or something appropriate to your museum into the relevant bowl
- **Must do** - must be cleared regularly and the results recorded on a simple chart
- **Ideally** - analyse regularly and feed into planning and visitor services training

Observation

- Requires training and confidence in use but can be as simple as noting which equipment and interactives etc. get used most
- Carries an ethical dimension if people are not aware that they are being observed
- Just walking the museum and seeing what and how people are interacting with can be invaluable
- **Must do** - clarify why you are doing it. Place a statement about it in the gallery, be discreet and diplomatic, do not impede the visitors' enjoyment, use trained staff, observe for short periods of time over a range of different days and times to capture different audiences
- **Ideally** - have a schedule and objectives for the observation, be consistent, record and analyse, feed into planning

Vox pops

- Can be filmed, recorded or just noted on paper or tablet
- Training for the interviewer is important but shouldn't impede you from just talking to your visitors
- You must get signed consent for use of the material and include all possible uses, including on social media
- Good for snapshots, "in the moment" opinions and capturing visitor engagement
- **Must do** - 2 or 3 questions or prompts and about 2–3 minutes filming is ideal; don't abuse people's goodwill. However, if they offer more information, keep filming or writing
- Create summaries of their views under your topic or questions
- **Ideally** - transcribe, blog, tweet, upload (if you have permissions)

Family and fun interactives

A whole area of study and design practice in itself! Good places to start are:

- Renaissance North West's report on family learning - museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/family-learning.pdf
- Suite of ideas, toolkits and guides from Group for Education in Museums (GEM) - www.gem.org.uk/res/howto/howto_menu.php
- engage (National Association for Gallery Education) - www.engage.org/toolkits



Online - web analytics

You can download a good guide to these here, but be aware of changes since this guide was written in 2011 - <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/lets-get-real-how-to-evaluate-online-success>

Online - social media

Museums increasingly use Tumblr, Instagram and Pinterest for communication and imaginative blogging. Green Ink is a lively and pun-filled blog by a young volunteer curator at Gawthorpe Textile Collection. It works because of the identification the audience feels with the curator; good museum blogs break down the barrier between curator and public - <http://green-ink-gh.tumblr.com>.

AIM's Success Guide to Social Media can help you get on top of this essential way of communicating with your audience -

www.aim-museums.co.uk/downloads/aeee4b8c-f54d-11e3-8be4-001999b209eb.pdf.

Don't forget to be on top of your Trip Advisor, Google, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter presence. The AIM Success Guide to Visitor Experience comments that:

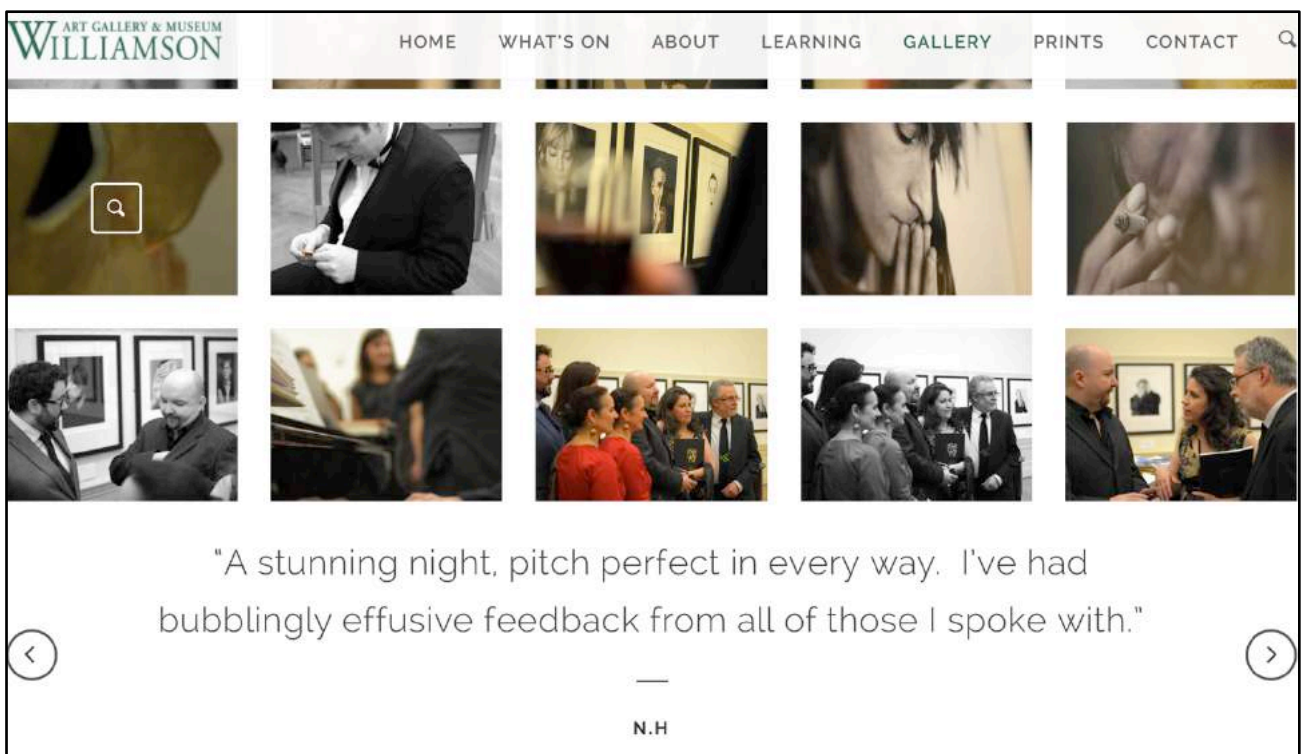
"Even if you think online reviews are rubbish, this is why you need to take notice of them:

- 30% of people who read your advertising material will trust it unquestioningly
- 70% trust online consumer opinion, BUT
- 92% trust personal recommendation (including via social media)"

AIM Success Guides, Successful Visitor Experience – Getting It Right, 2013

A good example of the use of audience feedback online is the website of The Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Wirral. The museum has used vox pop quotes, feedback emails and striking photographs to capture an event, helping to build an image of the museum and its audience. It is interesting that the event is a private view – whilst many museums feature these in passing on Twitter and Facebook, it is unusual to see it also reflected on the museum's website -

<http://williamsonartgallery.org/gallery/>.



Beyond consultation - co-creation and collaboration

This will be part of a further MDNW epublication on audience development and will focus on good practice models in the North West. In the meantime, here are some links to recent national and international case studies:

Derby Museums

RE:Make the Museum involved huge numbers of local people and channelled the ethos of the Maker Movement (highly appropriate in a city so enmeshed with industry) to create a new vision for the Silk Mill as part of a HLF application - <http://remakemuseum.tumblr.com>.

Museum 2.0/ The Participatory Museum

A ground-breaking approach to co-creation in museums developed by Nina Simon at the Santa Cruz Museum and the reflected in many blogs, articles, books and followers - <http://museumtwo.blogspot.co.uk>.

Museum Hack

A US initiative for attracting people who don't usually visit museums, especially younger people and "millennials", Museum Hack uses drama, technology, storytelling, selfies, re-enacting, fun, and guides talking unscripted about objects they are passionate about, to create interactive visitor tours. The approach is described on the AIM blog here - <https://aimuseums.wordpress.com/2015/11/30/reimagining-the-visitor-experience-with-museum-hack/> and at <https://museumhack.com>.

The Whitworth, Manchester

Engages with its audiences in non-traditional ways to make them feel part of the museum - www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/learn/

The Manchester Museum

Collaborates on a range of projects which impact both on the collections and the exhibitions - www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/community/communityengagement/communitycollaborations/

4.2 Using data for planning

The Accreditation standard is helpful in clarifying what you should be aiming for:

“The museum must demonstrate that it has a clear awareness of the breadth of current users and stakeholders, informed by the collection of data on users. The museum should evidence understanding of its users and non-users through the forward plan (see requirement 1.4).” Arts Council England, Accreditation Guidance Section 3: Users and their Experiences, June 2014

There are a number of ways to use your audience data in the planning cycle.

Periodic major re-evaluation

Can lead to a restatement of the museum’s core purpose or development of a Forward Plan. These reviews are often delivered by consultants and associated with funding bids or Accreditation. They offer a great opportunity for the museum to completely rethink, based on sound data. [Data to use](#) - demographic and segment profiles, motivation, travel, engagement and non-engagement and accessibility information; detailed focus group results or other conversations, web analytics. A mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

Annual reviews

Reviews of progress made and impact recorded, again feeding into the forward planning process and hopefully reflected in programmes. [Data to use](#) - summaries of audience data collected including demographics and segments, motivations and visit patterns, engagement with events, programmes, catering and retailing, social media and web analytics. A mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

Ongoing feedback

Feedback with a day-to-day impact e.g. in events, exhibitions, learning programmes, staff and volunteer training, catering, access, etc. This kind of data should be regularly shared at team meetings, actioned and then that action fed back to the public e.g. through “You Said...We Did...” boards. [Data to use](#) - verbal and written comments to staff and volunteers; visitor books, post-it note analyses, teacher feedback forms, immediate social media and web feedback. Probably mostly qualitative data and should stimulate immediate action or action with a fixed delivery date.

Audience development planning: models and toolkits

The Audience Agency provides a free audience development planning tool on its website as well as a detailed and comprehensive guide to audience development planning - www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-development-planner.

Museum iD gives a good template for audience development planning - www.museum-id.com/idea-detail.asp?id=353.

AIM's "Success Guide to Visitor Experience" contains useful advice on simple feedback and translating it into service planning -

www.aim-museums.co.uk/downloads/a4415601-b24a-11e2-b572-001999b209eb.pdf.

Case study

The Grosvenor Museum, Chester, in partnership with The Audience Agency, worked on a project consisting of two focus groups of previous users. A detailed analysis and report helped the museum evaluate a change in its interpretation and informed future developments -

www.theaudienceagency.org/success-stories/the-grosvenor-museum.



Links and contacts

Museum Development North West publications

- Viewpoint basic user guide, includes crucial information on designing surveys on Viewpoint as well as retrieving data
<https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/viewpoint-mdnw-user-guide-blog-version.pdf>
- Evaluation of MLA NW audience development training, 2005
www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/MLA-audience-development-training-evaluation2.pdf

Arts Council England publications

- Insight profiles and their explanations
www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/arts-audiences-insight-2011
- Many resources, reports, and grant guidelines - enter "audience development" in the search box on the website
www.artscouncil.org.uk/googlesearch/?q=audience%20development
- This information sheet for Grants for the Arts contains much useful information on capturing audience basics and presenting data for ACE
www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/gfta_info_sheets_nov_2012/Audience_development_and_marketing.pdf
- Results of case studies in the Arts Nation North using Insight segments
www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/funded-projects/case-studies/arts-nation-north/

Other key organisations

Arts Marketing Association - www.a-m-a.co.uk/index.aspx

Culturehive – a resource of articles, toolkits and publications - culturehive.co.uk

AIM – excellent resources, advice, blog - www.aim-museums.co.uk

Visitor Studies Group has great resources, conferences and events; their toolbox resource of links is here - <http://visitors.org.uk/toolbox/>

The Audience Agency is a wealth of resources, including the Audience Finder system - www.theaudienceagency.org/contact

Audience research, systems and tools

CRT Customer Research Technology Limited – www.crtviewpoint.com

Visitor Verdict/BDRC - www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/aim_visitor_verdict/

Audience Finder/Audience Agency – www.audiencefinder.org/about/

Culture Metrics - www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/quality-work/quality-metrics/

SurveyMonkey - www.surveymonkey.com

Audience Spectrum – www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum

MOSAIC - culturehive.co.uk/resources/an-introduction-to-mosaic-profiling-groups

ACORN - culturehive.co.uk/resources/how-acorn-segmentation-of-audiences-can-help-arts-marketers-target-their-communication

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's Culture Segments - culturehive.co.uk/resources/introducing-culture-segments

Google Analytics - culturehive.co.uk/resources/google-analytics-segments

For a list of suppliers to carry out market research - www.museumsassociation.org/find-a-supplier

Research

CultureCase provides a snapshot of current international academic research into audiences and culture, including museums, in the form of short articles, abstracts and links to open access research - www.culturecase.org

Blogs

Kate Measures and her team blog on audience development and evaluation - greedysquirrel.co.uk/articles/

Sally Fort blogs on projects, case studies and models in engagement, learning and consultation - www.sallyfort.com/blog

Nina Simon's Museum 2.0 blog covers many aspects of audience development and co-creation - <http://museumtwo.blogspot.co.uk>

North West consultant Marge Ainsley's blog muses on audience development, customer experiences and new ideas - <https://medium.com/@margelicious>

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Images:

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Title page – Gawthorpe Textile Collection

p2 Manchester Jewish Museum

p3 Kendal Museum, Museum of Science & Industry, Museum of Transport, Working Class Movement Library

p6 Courtesy of Association of Independent Museums

p7 MDNW infographic, MDNW, 2014

p10 Lancashire Infantry Museum, Preston

p20 Pankhurst Centre

p24 Cumbria Museum of Military Life, Carlisle

p27 © Gawthorpe Textiles Collection, courtesy of Gawthorpe Textiles Collection

p28 © Pennine Lancashire Museums

p29 © Wordsworth Trust

p30 Courtesy of Helen Corkery and HiDDEN network

p31 Feedback wall, "Samurai Arms and Armour", Grosvenor Museum, Chester, November 2015 – February 2016, MDNW 2015. Courtesy of West Cheshire Museums

p33 Englesea Brook Museum and Chapel

p34 © Williamson Art Gallery, Birkenhead

p37 Port Sunlight Museum

p40 Penrith and Eden Museum

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