Report 6
Audience research as an essential part of building a new permanent exhibition

Stories from the field
## Table of contents

- Introduction to LEM – The Learning Museum project  
  Margherita Sani  
  5
- Introduction  
  Bart Distelmans  
  8
- Case study 1: Forssa Museum, Forssa - Finland  
  Kristiina Huttunen, Sanna Kattelus and Pauliina Kinanen (eds.)  
  11
- Case study 2: Gallo-Roman Museum, Tongeren - Belgium  
  Bart Distelmans  
  27
- Case study 3: Riverside Museum, Glasgow - U.K.  
  Sam Groves  
  41
- Conclusions  
  Bart Distelmans  
  57
- Appendix 1  
  60
- Appendix 2  
  69
- Appendix 3  
  72
- Appendix 4  
  73
- Contact information  
  75
- Authors’ biographical details  
  76
- Photography credits  
  77
- LEM - The Learning Museum Partners  
  78
“Audience research as an essential part of building a new permanent exhibition. Stories from the field” is one of seven reports which are published within the framework of the EU-funded project LEM – The Learning Museum, which aims to create a permanent network of museums and cultural heritage organisations, to ensure that they can exploit their potential as learning places and play an active role with regard to lifelong learning in a knowledge based Europe.

The project is funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme Grundtvig for the period 2010-2013 and can be regarded as the arrival point of a number of previous EU projects carried out between 2007-2010, which dealt with lifelong learning in museums (LLML and MuMAE), intercultural dialogue (MAP for ID) and volunteering (VoCH), all of which are documented in the LEM website.

LEM not only draws from the materials collected, the lessons learned and the contacts established by its forerunners, but moves one step further in the direction of establishing a permanent space for museum professionals and adult educators to meet, exchange experiences and good practices and learn from each other, therefore contributing to the creation of a European community of professionals interested in heritage education and lifelong learning in museums.

The network started with 23 partners from 17 European countries, plus one partner from the United States of America, the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Denver, taking advantage of the possibility offered in 2010 for the first time by the Lifelong Learning Programme, to involve third country organisations.

As a network, LEM aims in the first place to grow and acquire new associate members which, in March 2013, had tripled the number of founding institutions. A wide range of museums, heritage organisations, academies, institutes for learning and universities are now part of the network, representing 25 countries.

There are Ministries, Museum Associations and other umbrella organisations, individual museums, small and large, institutions active in the education field, all working on an equal level and engaged in sharing information, making it available to a wider public and learning from one another.

The philosophy of LEM indeed is that of considering museums not only as learning places, where educational activities are delivered, but also as learning organisations themselves, learning from the public, the local community, other agencies and, of course, from other museums.

The idea of peer learning is core in LEM and, in order to fully support it, work has been articulated into working groups, each led by a LEM partner. The research subjects have been chosen by the working groups themselves:
Professional and institutional level, but allows individuals to actually learn by being exposed to different working situations.

Dissemination is another important aspect of LEM. International conferences, seminars and round tables are being organised regularly and attract a wide European audience. They are occasions for intensive networking and learning, offer plenty of social events and are combined with visits to local institutions to meet stakeholders. Where possible, they are also live streamed to reach an even wider public. A number of smaller dissemination events are also organised at local or national level.

Finally, the website is the digital platform where all the knowledge acquired by the project is kept and made available. It is a dynamic and interactive forum, first of all to receive and exchange materials about the subject area ‘museums and lifelong learning’ and secondly to provide information about the project. It is a virtual learning environment, providing information on existing literature, projects and actors and is kept updated through continuous research, data analysis and provision of new information by an international editorial team and by the project partners. Everyone is invited to send materials to be published on the LEM website, and participation is favoured through the use of web 2.0 tools. At the beginning of each month an electronic newsletter is sent out to all those who have subscribed to it.

The website therefore functions as a community-building tool for all those who are interested in the topics addressed by LEM. Through the networking activities of its partners and associates, the website and the dissemination events, LEM expects to reach the whole museum and heritage community and a large part of the adult education sector.

www.lemproject.eu
Introduction

Bart Distelmans

In this publication three museums report on why and how they carried out audience research as part of the process of developing their new permanent exhibition. Each museum tells its story.

In recent years the Forssa Museum in Forsa (Finland), the Gallo-Roman Museum in Tongeren (Belgium) and the Riverside Museum in Glasgow (UK) have completely rethought the way they present their collection. The Gallo-Roman Museum re-opened in 2009, as did the Riverside Museum in 2011, while at the Forssa Museum work is still under way. The Forssa is scheduled to re-open at the end of 2013.

Not only are these museums spread out geographically across Europe, but their backgrounds and collections differ from each other. The number of visitors they attract and the financial resources at their disposal differ too. The Forssa Museum focuses on local history and aspires the newly modernised museum will attract 15,000 visitors a year. The Gallo-Roman Museum houses an archaeological collection and in peak years was taken into consideration by museum staff during the design process. This lent to the development and design of the exhibitions. The Gallo-Roman Museum carried out quantitative research on a large scale to find out what and how visitors and potential visitors preferred to learn about the distant past in the museum. Statistical analysis was used to generate ideal type profiles of its visitors, which were taken into consideration by museum staff during the design process. This lent to the development and design of the exhibitions. The Forssa Museum was particularly keen to involve the local people in its makeover. But the various initiatives organised to this end also provided useful information for the new presentation. The opinions of both the public at large and specific stakeholders were sought in various, sometimes highly imaginative ways and incorporated into the actual design process.

In this publication the three museums report on their experiences, warts and all, as the authors firmly believe that other museums may well benefit from insight into the approaches each museum undertook. Consequently, a clear picture is painted of how each museum collected data about its public by means of one or more research methods, both qualitative and quantitative. Light is systematically shed on how the information was used in practice in the process of developing new presentations and displays. By way of a summary, the final part of the publication draws some conclusions. What can we learn on a general level from the three case studies?

The publication was produced by the LEM working group ‘Audience research, learning styles and visitor relation management’, which visited both the Riverside and Gallo-Roman Museums. During these study visits the participants learned about the services the museums provide to the public. Research methods were explained and discussed at length. Parallels and differences soon became apparent.

The Gallo-Roman Museum came up with the idea of bringing together these fascinating practical stories in a single publication. Through Pauliina Kinanen, one of the members of the above-mentioned working group and project coordinator of the Finnish Museum Association, a third museum was involved, the Forssa Museum. This smaller museum had carried out its audience research in a different way again, also with a view to creating a permanent exhibition.

The authors of this publication hope it will motivate others to carry out similar research, for the effort have proved more than worthwhile.
Introduction

This case study tells the story of the ‘Vorssammuseo 3.0’ project, the objective of which is to refurbish the visitor areas and permanent exhibition and to reform the pedagogical services of Forssa Museum. The project was established in the autumn of 2011. The planning and design were completed during 2012, and the building work will be carried out during 2013.

Forssa Museum is located in southern Finland, in a triangle formed by three of the country’s biggest cities, some 100 km north of Helsinki. The city of Forssa has a population of about 17,000, and grew around cotton mills during the mid-1800s.

The museum was founded in the 1920s by the local history and museum society, Lounais-Hämeen Kotiseutu- ja Museoyhdistys, which managed the museum up until 2010, when it transferred to the care and management of the city of Forssa. The museum has two full-time employees, a director and a curator. Project employees and fixed-term employees included, the museum employs between four and six people during any one year.

The majority of the museum collection, which numbers 25,000 items, consists of old objects related to local rural culture. The photography collection contains approximately 110,000 photographs. The museum’s special feature is its archive of textiles, which includes materials from Forssa’s textile industry from a period that spans from the 1800s to 2009. The permanent collection and temporary exhibition galleries are located in a former cotton storehouse in the quarter of the Forssa Spinning Mill. Since the end of industrial activity in the quarter in the 1980s, the Spinning Mill has become a hub for the town’s various cultural facilities.

In addition to the main exhibition space at the Spinning Mill, the museum has two other exhibition spaces: Textile Museum Tyyki and the Ronttismäki Factory Workers’ Museum. This case focuses on the refurbishment of the main exhibition space at the Spinning Mill. When using the term Forssa Museum, we refer to the main exhibition space at the Spinning Mill unless specified differently.

The museum complex is visited by 5,000–8,000 guests every year. Forssa Museum accounts for approximately 4,000–6,000 of these visitors, comprised of both local people and tourists.

Background of the refurbishment project

When the city took over the management of Forssa Museum in 2010, both the museum services as well as the permanent exhibition on the history of the Forssa region were in need of change. Although the museum is located in the middle of a vibrant cultural centre, visitor numbers were low. The oldest sections of the permanent exhibition have not
been renewed in over 40 years. The technique and narrative of the exhibition were outdated. The information content of the permanent exhibition was fragmentary. The history of the textile industry, that so characterises the locality, was virtually absent from the exhibition. The museum management and day-to-day activities were entrenched and it was out of touch with the lives of the people in its community. The possibility to refurbish the permanent exhibition became reality once the project secured ERDF funding through the Regional Council of Häme. The ‘Vorssammuseo 3.0’ project was launched in late 2011. A project manager and researcher were employed to manage the planning and refurbishment of the permanent exhibition and reform the content delivery with museum staff.

The exhibition design incorporated a revised and updated pedagogy in the interpretation and delivery of content for its visitors. The aim of the permanent exhibition project was to transform the relationship between the museum and its visitors into a more communal one. It was decided that the museum would strive to make the museum a meaningful and memorable learning environment for all visitor groups.

Objectives and methods of the project

Prior to the beginning of the project in 2011, Forssa Museum underwent an accessibility analysis. Once the ‘Vorssammuseo 3.0’ project began, a new customer survey was not considered necessary. The shortcomings of the old permanent exhibition were apparent and had been raised in discussions with visitors on many occasions over the course of time. On the other hand, it would have been impossible to conduct a quantitatively thorough customer survey in a short period of time. In addition, it was thought that the involvement measures related to the refurbishment of the exhibitions project would yield information and opinions from visitors that could be taken into account with the design of the permanent exhibition. The aim was to give all interested parties a chance to influence the content of certain pre-determined projects and, on the other hand, to gain easy access to information related to each phase of the design process. From the start, the intention was to keep the process transparent, to justify ensuing outcomes, to maintain a low communications threshold and to ensure the approachability of the project staff.

Visitors’ opinions on the refurbishment of the museum’s permanent exhibition were collected throughout the year (from December 2011 to December 2012) by way of various involvement campaigns. Questionnaires were carried out by setting up opinion walls and other pen-and-paper tasks in the old exhibition space. The questionnaires were also available online through the project blog, Facebook and Twitter. A poll concerning the appearance of the museum was conducted at the regional museum fair. The blog served as an avenue through which to gather opinions on the content of future exhibitions. Various stakeholder groups also supplied the project with opinions on the refurbishment of the permanent exhibition. The most important stakeholder groups comprise of various local associations and societies. Teachers and pupils from different educational levels form another key stakeholder group.

Tasks and questionnaires were carefully formulated. The framing of specific questions was avoided in discussions with stakeholders, so as to minimise possible suggestive or leading effects. A method that relies on observation based on the Reggio Emilia approach1, was applied to certain groups, such as pre-schoolers, to find out which aspects of the old exhibition children considered interesting. The effectiveness of the exhibition trail was tested in a similar way with the help of some individuals. The information collated informed the architect of the exhibition and was incorporated in the new design.

Conducting audience involvement in conjunction with the exhibition refurbishment

Finding out what visitors think

2011

When the ‘Vorssammuseo 3.0’ project began in November 2011, there were no detailed plans how to involve visitors to the museum. The first opportunity to do so presented itself accidentally. The Spinning Mill Christmas bazaar, held annually at the end November and early December, is an event that attracts hundreds of visitors to the museum in a short space of time. During the bazaar, admission to the permanent exhibition is free and its temporary exhibition gallery hosts the Christmas tree exhibition by a local child welfare organisation. The project team took advantage of this by arranging in the old exhibition space, two questionnaires (an opinion wall and a poll using Post-it® notes) where visitors would find it easy and convenient to participate and yield a great number of responses.

An opinion wall inquiring about the essence of Forssa identity was set up in the exhibition gallery. It was considered essential that the question on the wall would be easy, quick to respond to and thought-provoking to locals and out-of-towners alike. Locals were given a chance to share their thoughts on the local identity and out-of-towners a chance to evaluate the image that Forssa, as a locale, evokes in them. The goal was to discover local expressions and opinions which could lend to the design of the exhibition.

In total, there were 50 comments regarding the Forssa identity. Key common expressions raised by visitors included the role of local dialect and the special terminology related to the textile mill was viewed as central in the story of local history. Yet the use of local dialect was also opposed: the underlying opinion being that the use of the vernacular in a museum was inappropriate. The building tradition related to the history of the textile mill was considered important, as were sensory experiences related to childhood, such as certain traditional foods. Local landmarks also proved to be important manifestations of affiliation with one’s home district, as did local customs.

In the poll visitors could mark the most and least interesting themes of, and items in, the old permanent exhibition with green and red Post-it® notes. It was hoped that the results of the poll would serve as a

1 See official website for further details on the Reggio Emilia approach http://www.reggiochildren.it/?lang=en
guide as to which items and themes of the old exhibition should be preserved for the new exhibition. 439 visitor questionnaires were collated. The greatest amount of positive feedback was given to a large-scale model that depicts the local arts and crafts district. The museum’s old shop and photograph wall also received many votes. The number of red Post-it® notes (negative notes) was surprisingly low. Instead, all items or pieces of a thematic subject matter seemed to attract at least a few green Post-it® notes. People took the aforementioned task to heart. Based on a rough observational estimate, those who partook seemed to spend a longer amount of time in the exhibition. Verbal feedback was also collected: visitors found the exhibition entertaining because they had something to do there.

2012

A similar set of questionnaires and polls was also carried out a year later in 2012, again coinciding with the Spinning Mill Christmas bazaar. As the former permanent exhibition was being displayed during the last few days of the event, sketches of the future exhibition - prepared by exhibition architect Taina Väisänen - were put on display in the old exhibition space. The sketches presented an exhibition trail, narrative and themes in a concrete manner. Visitors were encouraged to give feedback via a feedback indicator also placed in the exhibition gallery. As in all other questionnaires and polls conducted by the museum, feedback could be submitted anonymously.

The sketches on the future exhibition were viewed by approximately 700 people and a total of 131 opinions were stuck on the various opinion walls. Nearly all of the opinions submitted via the feedback indicator set up in the exhibition gallery were polite or complimentary. The number of critical observations remained very low – only one or two were submitted. Staff responded to this critique both online and on-site.

The second questionnaire organised in 2012 Christmas bazaar addressed the selection of photographs from the ethnographic photographic collection. Visitors were asked to select which of the displayed photo prints, were of most interest. The selected photographs would then be put on display in the exhibition gallery and refurbished customer service areas.

According to the poll the most popular items turned out to be photographs related to childhood as well as landscapes, whereas the expectation had been that the artistically high-quality portraits, valued by museum staff, would prove to be the most popular items.

The third customer survey executed during the 2012 Christmas bazaar related to a representation of the interior of a 1970s apartment block, which was to be included in the new exhibition. The objective was to study which aspects, objects and interior design elements were characteristic of Forssa homes during the period in question. In this way, the interior could be furnished with objects and aspects that evoke feelings of recognition and identification.

This survey provided no surprises. The strong colours of the era and the designs – important for a town built around the textile industry – were considered important signs of their time. A desire to see displays of the interior design solutions of the kitchen furniture store that used to operate in the town was expressed.

Questionnaires of a smaller scale were also carried out throughout the year 2012, either in conjunction with events, or via the blog. In the summer of 2012, the project employees took part in the regional museum fair, where they organised a raffle on the subject of the kind of museum that visitors would like to have. This was continued in the form of a questionnaire at the museum in the autumn.

The total number of participants and respondents was 79. According to the results such attributes as ‘tourist attraction’, ‘open’, ‘entertaining’ and ‘narrative’ were popular. The respondents did not really see a museum as a conference facility, a place to arrange a date, or a spectacle. This particular poll functioned primarily as a conversation initiator. It also provided guidelines for the future museum pedagogy and particularly event organising.

In early 2012, the project blog was supplemented with a questionnaire on exhibition texts and contents in which visitors were asked whether they preferred
Cooperation with schools and teachers began during the early stages of the exhibition project, when museum staff members visited faculty meetings at schools to brief teachers about the project. Collaboration efforts with pre-school teachers had begun even earlier. The intention at this stage was to involve – in addition to middle school teachers – history and subject teachers across all levels of education. In addition to visiting faculty meetings, museum staff gave different groups of teachers tours of the museum as well as pupils accompanied by their teachers in 2012.

A number of pilot guided tours and some pedagogic content were realised during 2012. Pre-schoolers were given an opportunity to search for new objects within the permanent exhibition and try activities based on images of factory work in a bygone era. Activity-intensive tours based on a new handbook of the Spinning Mill quarter, published in the spring, were carried out with 13-year-olds at this venue. In the autumn of 2012, middle-schoolers and special groups were taken on ‘ghost tours’ in the darkened museum. During the spring, 9-year-olds were given an opportunity to participate in photography orienteering and a ‘museum mystery’ trail, coursing through the various exhibitions in different galleries. Another pilot project focused on a museum club for middle-schoolers. It was jointly run by a teacher and the project manager of the ‘Vorssammuseo 3.0’ project. At the club children made their own versions of exhibit items with stories.

In addition, the museum provided premises for the lessons of educational institutions: the guitar group of the local conservatory, for example, held a session open to all museum visitors who wanted to listen in on the reading about content from wall plates, touch screens, exhibition leaflets or some other medium. The responses numbered 12 in total. It was soon discovered that, unless the questionnaire was conducted in connection with an event, the number of responses tended to remain low. In such cases, responses could be deemed as merely indicative. On the other hand, even a single opinion could represent the opinions of several people who remained silent in the background. The questionnaires were available to pick-up without the assistance of staff. In practice, though, the evaluation of the exhibition during the time of the 2011 Christmas bazaar, in particular, required museum staff to encourage visitors and inform them about the opportunity to get involved.

Involving stakeholders and schools

Of the local associations, the local history and museum society (Lounais-Hämeen Kotiseutu- ja Museoyhdistys, or LHKMY) and parish society of Muola are key partners of the museum. LHKMY is the founder of the museum and still owns the vast majority of its collections. The Muola Parish Society is composed of Karelian evacuees who relocated to the Forssa region in the 1940s and their descendants. The old permanent exhibition has a section built by the evacuees. It contains items from and photographs of the home districts the evacuees left behind as well as records of their settlement in their new home district. Collaboration with other local associations and societies was promoted by informing similar associations and societies of the museum refurbishment project in events arranged at the museum or during museum staff visits to such associations’ own events.
were lost or destroyed during the wars in the 1940s. The feedback received from other associations and societies was less organised: various members voiced their wishes for histories of local music, children and the labour movement to be included in the exhibition. Feedback from children and young people regarding the new exhibition were gathered in discussions that took place during the guided tours. Teachers submitted feedback through a variety of channels: those who read the script gave comments on the overall content and those who visited the museum with their classes gave their feedback together with their respective classes. On the one hand, feedback received from school children reflected the need for activities in the museum as well as being able to view groups of items or subject matter on display in the new exhibition. Feedback from teachers was very similar to that given by their students: they hoped that the museum would have points of activity and that the phrase “do not touch” would not have to be used as frequently as in the old exhibition. The teachers did not express many preferences or hopes in respect of themes; rather, they hoped that more attention would be paid to local content and the linking of such to similar developments elsewhere in Europe. Individual desires to see displays about children’s history and technological advancement were also expressed. It was also hoped that there would be a practical possibility to divide the pupils of a big classroom into several groups, each of which would be provided with their own programme. The preference that content would be multi-layered was also expressed: this would mean that the museum

2 War here refers to the Finnish Winter War 1939-1940 and Continuation War 1941-1944.
Feedback from students concerning the inclusion of specific groups of objects will be taken into account. The popular weapons will be put on display. The collection of paper money will be put on display either in the exhibition gallery, the old shop or lobby. Hands-on activities will be available in several points of the exhibition with the help of touch screen content and tasks. Their feedback informed the exhibition design in relation to the amount of and quality of texts: it was decided that the texts on display will be designed and edited so that a 12-year-old could not be seen and experienced during a single visit.

The primary purpose of the customer activities carried out in December 2011 and December 2012 was to get the customers involved in the project. The intention was to open avenues and opportunities for cooperation between the museum and the city’s residents, to create communally and to raise interest in the future of the museum. Ultimately, it was decided that the future exhibition content and panels would be drawn up by museum staff rather than communally – an option considered during the early stages of the project. This option was abandoned as the process was deemed too time-consuming. The project researcher composed the script for the future permanent exhibition during the spring of 2012. The script took into account the results of the various questionnaires and in June was emailed to approximately 40 interested parties: classroom/homeroom teachers, private individuals interested in local history and people whose recreational activities or work is represented in the museum. The script was also made available on the museum website, on social media, in the local newspaper and on flyers distributed in the museum as well as at various local events. It was also broadcasted on local radio. The various stages of the development of the script work were also described on the ‘Vorssammuseo 3.0’ blog, which was updated every week. Readers and recipients were encouraged to give feedback.

All in all, the involvement process and the gathering of visitor and stakeholder opinions and expectations proved to be informal and flexible. Since the museum’s entire staff agreed on the importance of involving the community, any and all situations of dialogue at the museum or within its sphere quickly turned into discussions about the refurbishment and a mapping of opinions. The goal was to identify weaknesses and to modify operations accordingly.

The feedback of the questionnaires – opinions and preferences – guided the design of the exhibition. For example expressions of wishes by community groups to display and digitise historical photography by the Muolaa Parish Society will be realised. Hopes expressed by the local history and museum society, to include the region of south-western Tavastia in the exhibition, will be implemented by selecting items to be put on display equally from all municipalities of south-western Tavastia (Lounais-Häme). It was also decided that the concept of a home district was to be one of the main exhibition themes. This would also serve as a means of presenting events that occurred around the time the museum was founded, the spirit and mood of that time, as well as the starting points from which the museum has grown to its present form. The history of Forssa’s children will be displayed and made accessible via a touch screen, play and task points and through selected exhibit items. Expressions of interest by teachers – that the exhibit be multi-layered – will be implemented by dividing content between various media such as wall texts, touch screen texts and digitised original documents, pictures, audio-visual content and by offering differentiated pedagogical content to different age groups in the future. The teachers’ observations about the functionality of the museum facilities influenced the practical exhibition architecture and design of the exhibition trail. The museum will be able to divide a class of 30 pupils into two or three groups. This will be achieved by making use of the audio-visual space to be included in the exhibition as well as the conference room on the ground floor of the museum.

3 Customer refers to visitor. The term is frequently used in Finland.
4 The authors refer to this content as the script.
Resistance to change regarding the new permanent exhibition was evident in some stakeholder groups during the initial stages of the project. It was feared that personal and local history would disappear from the permanent exhibition. The discussions served as a means to assure stakeholders that a certain theme would be taken into account in the new exhibition, albeit in a way different from the old one or from an entirely new perspective.

The opportunity to comment on the script was made available to the public in early summer 2012. Feedback was scarce. The comments were brief and of a more general nature, rather than focused on content. It became apparent that the design documents drawn up in the project were perceived as difficult to read and understand. On reflection an alternative questionnaire may have gathered sufficient comments and responses regarding the script.

Project staff examined the extent to which involvement of customers constituted genuine cooperation and the extent to which the involvement remained a mere gesture. The intentions were nevertheless sincere. The desire to change the image of the museum from that of a rigid, monolithic institution to that of a local, community institution that serves its people was strong. At best, the speed at which plans turned into action was able to generate contemporaneous content, and any opportunities that presented themselves were seized upon rapidly and successfully. Even when the child can understand them with relative ease.

Regarding other feedback, the hope that the history of the labour movement be put on display will be implemented. While this theme would have been among those implemented even without the feedback, it did testify to the importance of local history. The Forssa dialect and the specialised terminology related to the textile mill will be exhibited via an interactive ‘career choice wheel of fortune’, so that those not keen to know or learn about dialect can bypass it. Photographs will be on display throughout the entire exhibition trail, as will the design of the textile mill throughout the ages. The history of the Forssa music scene will be displayed with the help of exhibit items and text. The voices of the textile mill workers will be heard in many different exhibition themes. This will be realised with the help of material gathered by the museum in projects related to oral tradition.

Challenges - solved and unresolved

All the ideas collected during the project were discussed by the exhibition working group, although not all of them were implemented.

Some of the contributors to the feedback were not necessarily aware of what a modern museum exhibit is like or about the financial resources of museums. Such parties were apt to express hopes of the kind that items not included in the museum collections, for example, or technology beyond the scale of the entire refurbishment budget be put on display.

Some other ideas submitted by visitors were so obvious or overused that the project team was not inclined to carry them out. Expressions of interest regarding exhibit items will be carried out, but to a limited extent. A select number of objects will be displayed in the new exhibition: some decisions influenced by issues regarding security, other decisions influenced by exhibition content.

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Project staff examined the extent to which involvement of customers constituted genuine cooperation and the extent to which the involvement remained a mere gesture. The intentions were nevertheless sincere. The desire to change the image of the museum from that of a rigid, monolithic institution to that of a local, community institution that serves its people was strong. At best, the speed at which plans turned into action was able to generate contemporaneous content, and any opportunities that presented themselves were seized upon rapidly and successfully. Even when the
involvement efforts remained superficial, they promoted the attempt of the museum to open up and informed visitors of the refurbishment programme.

Conclusion: The involvement efforts’ impact on the exhibition refurbishment project

The various methods of involvement and the work among stakeholders guided the exhibition design of Forssa Museum in terms of both content and item selections. The essential objective was to strengthen and renew various customer groups’ ties to the museum and enable open dialogue in relation to the refurbishment of the permanent exhibition and the future of the museum. The work with the public has played an integral characteristic of the “Vorssammuseo 3.0” project. The project has, for its own part, prepared the museum’s audience for the change that will take place once the new exhibition opens: the museum seeks to become the local residents’ living room – a source of knowledge, experiences and inspiration. The groundwork for this has already been laid through the collection of feedback and opinions and the appropriate processing of criticism. Forssa Museum is being forged into an organisation of tradition, capable of cooperation that lives and develops in step with its audience. As this is being written, the museum building is being vacated and the old permanent exhibition is being dismantled. The design work continues in respect of content texts. Item selections and major themes for the exhibition have been finalised. The project blog will continue to communicate events related to the exhibition refurbishment on a weekly basis and offer interested parties and people a glance into, and a platform for commenting on, the refurbishment work. The museum’s Facebook pages present the exhibition project in the form of a montage.

At this point, it can be said that the impact of museum visitors will be visible in the refurbished Forssa Museum both during its opening phase in late 2013, as well as thereafter. In the future, cooperation with customers will be increased. Some of the exhibition objects will be displayed in cases, the contents of which will be changed from time to time. Selection of objects will be carried out with the help of the museum collection management system’s customer interface, which will be introduced during 2013. It is hoped that the customer interface will function as a crowd sourcing tool, and the plan is to concretise miniature online exhibitions prepared by customers in the permanent exhibition. The plans for 2013 include collaboration with art schools and art education in schools – the idea is to use the current museum refurbishment project as a basis for pupils and students’ project works. The intention is to launch the museum pedagogical programme as part of the project once the new permanent exhibition has opened.
Introduction

The Gallo-Roman Museum is located in Tongeren, Belgium’s oldest city. The archaeological museum reopened in May 2009 after three years of building work, which resulted in (among other things) a totally revamped permanent exhibition. That exhibition tells the story of the life of man in the Limburg region, from prehistory to the early Middle Ages. There are 2,500 objects on permanent display, most of them utility objects from the Roman period.

Considerable forethought and study went into developing the new presentation. For example, the museum carried out extensive quantitative research to identify the preferences and expectations of its visitors. The findings of that research were taken into account during the design process.

More than 100,000 people visit the exhibition every year. These visitors consist of mainly families with children, schools and socio-cultural organisations. They are attracted by the accessible multimedia presentations which has also impressed the international museum sector. In 2011 the Gallo-Roman Museum was the first Belgian museum ever declared ‘European Museum of the Year’.

Why the research? Learning for everyone

The museum took a thoroughgoing approach to developing the new exhibition. Preparations began in 2002. Led by a working group, the first step was to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the previous permanent exhibition. Furthermore, a wealth of specialist literature on museology was consulted, and for inspiration the multidisciplinary team visited a number of museums at home and abroad. At the same time objectives were formulated. They gave the project direction and, as the team soon came to realise, helped create an exhibition with a clear identity.

Just about everyone agreed that above all else the new presentation should be educational. It would be geared to ‘learning’, but be anything but dull. Or to put it more formally: “The Gallo-Roman Museum should be an environment where visitors learn about the material and immaterial culture of individuals, groups and societies in the distant past through the collection.”

The museum team resolved to create a permanent exhibition that focuses on the relationship between cause and effect. People should come to understand the what, how and why of major social transformations in the distant past and, in the light of that, the museum chose as its motto the following words of the Roman emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius: “What follows is always organically related to what went before.”
Chronological story

Of course in the early years a great deal of work was also done on the content of the exhibition. The most recent scientific information available about the region’s distant past was collated and one member of the working group was given the exacting task of condensing all the relevant content into an easy-to-read but in-depth and variegated chronological story. The focus of this story was major social transitions as well as turning points in the cultural history of the region. All the chapters were carefully checked by external experts, most attached to universities.

Almost automatically this approach led to the decision to create a chronological path through the galleries. After intense debate, the museum team eventually agreed that this classic approach was the most didactic and best suited to drawing attention to historical developments. At this stage the museum collection only determined the geographical focus and the starting point and end point of the story. In other words, rather than dictating the content, the collection served to illustrate it. The scientific staff in particular had reservations about this vision.

The objectives of the research

The decision to present an educational, chronologically-structured exhibition preceded the decision to conduct audience research. The main objective of the research was to find out how different people visiting the Gallo-Roman Museum wanted to learn about the distant past. The museum believed it was important to draw up a sort of ideal type profile of its visitors, based on various ‘learning’-related characteristics.

By taking account of these visitor profiles, the museum team hoped to create an exhibition that reflected the wishes and expectations of a diverse public.

As the museum wanted to obtain a representative picture of its visitors, it opted for quantitative research. The plan was to question a large group of people, including people who had never visited the museum. After going through a tender procedure, the Gallo-Roman Museum appointed consultants Kate, Thomas & Kleyn and drew up a research programme with them in 2004.

Drawing up the questionnaire

A list of 30 questions was put together. They were tried out several times and adjustments made, for example, and due to time restraints, questions had to be precise for questionnaires conducted over the phone. (see Appendix 1).

Demographic data, reasons for the visit and the form it took

In the first phase characteristics such as the gender, age and level of education of the respondents were recorded. They were also asked about their main interests and how accustomed they were to visiting historical museums. Their motivation for coming to a venue like the Gallo-Roman Museum and if they came alone or accompanied was also considered as part of the questionnaire.

Learning styles

To segment visitors on the basis of their learning style, the museum drew inspiration from the American educational psychologist David A. Kolb’s theoretical model. What is in reality a cyclical model is made up of a coordinate system with the following poles: ‘active experimentation’ versus ‘reflective observation’ (horizontal axis) and ‘concrete experience’ versus ‘abstract conceptualisation’ (vertical axis). Theoretically it encompasses all the phases of the learning cycle. The four quadrants of the circle correspond to four learning styles: ‘the doer’, ‘the dreamer’, ‘the deliberator’ and ‘the decider’.

The working group interpreted the above information freely and pragmatically. They eventually decided to determine a respondent’s learning style by identifying their position on both of the above axes. To be able to do this in a limited space of time and also by means of telephone interviews, ten polarising questions were
put to each respondent, five for each axis. By way of example, among the questions formulated to determine a respondent’s position on the horizontal axis was: “Which do you prefer to do: put together the skeleton of a Neanderthal and thus familiarise yourself with their physique (active/doer and decider) or watch an atmospheric, scientific documentary about what our distant ancestors looked like (reflective/dreamer and deliberator)?” For the vertical axis, questions like the following were asked: “What do you see as the ideal historical museum, a museum which resembles a historical novel (concrete/doer and dreamer) or a museum which resembles an encyclopaedia full of historical facts (abstract/decider and deliberator)?”

Preferences and expectations
Questions were also asked about the actual content. For instance, the museum wanted to know if visitors were more interested in facts and figures or in the why and wherefore of things. Was their geographical area of interest limited to Tongeren’s distant past or was it broader? Were visitors more interested in the purpose the archaeological objects served or in their aesthetics? We also asked about visitors’ choice of media: did they prefer text, audio, models, maps, film or multimedia? There were also questions relating to layout and the way visitors approach a museum visit. Did they favour large, immediately survey able spaces or more intimate nooks? Did they like to make their way through the whole museum from beginning to end, or did they like to explore it intuitively?

Conducting the survey
During the first few months of 2005, 500 people responded to the questionnaire. The respondents were at least ten years old. Every effort was made to question as representative a group of visitors or potential visitors as possible in terms of gender, age and place of residence. In the case of people actually in the museum, this was conducted face-to-face at the end of their visit. Potential visitors were asked the questions over the telephone. A number of young people answered the questions in class at school. The interviews took an average of 20 minutes to answer. The interviews were recorded by employees of the museum and students who first underwent a short training session.

The research findings
Segmentation
On the basis of the responses received to the questions relating to the Kolb model, we assigned the respondents to a quadrant on the circle. Most congregated around the ‘active and concrete’ (38%) and ‘reflective and abstract’ (27%) combination. A significant number of people held no clear position (15%).

However, the ‘doers’ (38%) were divided into a group of ‘10 to 14-year-olds’ and a group of ‘15-year-olds upwards’. These groups occupied the same position on the axes of Kolb’s learning model, but their wishes and expectations varied nevertheless. For example, they had different media preferences.

Fictitious characters were created to identify three key profiles: Piet, Mieke and Gust. These characters can be seen as the perfect representatives of each visitor segment. So eventually the respondents were narrowed down to three groups which were then given the following all-encompassing labels: ‘auto-active experiencers’ (Piet), ‘socio-active experiencers’ (Mieke) and ‘observing information seekers’ (Gust). They represented a minimum of 28%, 10% and 27% of our (potential) visitors.

We assumed that if the exhibition design met their profiles, we would be able to improve the learning experience for all visitors and visitor groups.

Profiles of Piet, Mieke and Gust
Piet is an auto-active experiencer. He is ten years old and usually visits a museum with his classmates, sometimes also with the family. Like his peers, he learns actively: touching things and trying them out, making models, solving puzzles, etc. His learning style is also one of experiencing: he wants to be able to sense or experience history, immerse himself in the distant past and empathise with it. He is susceptible to atmospheric presentations and evocations. Piet would prefer to explore the Gallo-Roman Museum independently at his own pace, without the services of a tour guide. Before visiting, he wants to work out a path
34-year-old Mieke is a socio-active experiencer. She never goes to a museum on her own, but likes to explore with others such as her partner, friends or children. Apart from wanting information about major social changes in history, Mieke would also like to learn about people’s daily lives. We labelled her ‘social’. Mieke shares Piet’s active learning style. She, too, likes ‘hands-on’ activities and wants to have her imagination stimulated. She is attracted to a museum that arouses feelings and emotions, where she can experience history and empathise with the past. Finally, Mieke prefers through the galleries according to his interests. At the same time, however, he likes to have his school friends nearby when he visits a museum. Piet is open to multimedia. If his teacher does book a guide, then it should be an interactive guide which also allows scope for asking questions. If you leave Piet and his friends to their own devices, they go from one display to another guided by their senses. This means they are not afraid to leave things out. Piet likes a layout that is full of surprises with small, convivial nooks.
They preferred a museum that asks open questions instead of questions to which there is only one possible answer. As far as the objects are concerned, there was clearly more interest in the purpose they serve than in their aesthetic qualities. This applied to Piet, Mieke and Gust.

Putting the research findings to use

The audience research was completed in June 2005 and the research findings were passed on to the designers. Initially the museum worked with the London-based exhibition design group Event Communications. Later on it worked with in set-designer Niek Kortekaas and architects De Gregorio & Partners.

The most important exercise was to divide the chronological story into clusters of meaningful units. Each cluster consisted of a minimum of a text panel with a clear message, often but not always accompanied by objects. The content of each cluster was coupled with appropriate media, such as models, synthetic figures and drawings. At first members of the working group just kept the research findings in the back of their minds during this intensive process, but after a while stricter use was made of the data with more conscious and systematic thought being given to how that data could be linked to one or ideally more target groups.

This way of working was relatively new to the team and though getting used to it required some considerable effort, in the end it did pay off. It also proved very time-consuming and some designers had to be persuaded of the importance of the approach. This also meant that the findings were not always as scrupulously implemented

small, intimate spaces that are full of surprises to large, immediately surveyable galleries.

51-year old Gust is an observing information seeker. Sometimes he goes to a museum on his own, sometimes with his grandchildren or friends, often with his wife. His older friends, on the other hand, usually visit a museum with a socio-cultural organisation. Piet is an experienced museum-goer and a history buff.

Gust likes to read texts, watch short, interesting films and study the objects carefully. He observes rather than actively participates. He prefers to be taken round by a guide. For him it is important to obtain scientific information and to find out and understand as much as possible. If he finds something particularly interesting, he wants to be able to explore it in greater depth, preferably at the museum itself. Gust prefers a quiet environment where he can admire the objects at his leisure. Gust follows the route through the museum step-by-step and in a logical order. He likes immediately surveyable galleries and does not like to miss seeing all of the displays.

Common characteristics

The research clearly showed that the three groups also shared common characteristics. For example, the vast majority in each visitor group claimed they wanted to see everything in the museum. By this they probably meant that they did not want to go away feeling they had missed something.

Irrespective of their learning profile, visitors were clearly more interested in the why and wherefore of things than in facts and figures. All the visitors liked a museum to give several opinions on a subject rather than just one. They preferred a museum that asks open questions instead of questions to which there is only one possible answer. As far as the objects are concerned, there was clearly more interest in the purpose they serve than in their aesthetic qualities. This applied to Piet, Mieke and Gust.

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writing texts about the function of the objects. Striking synthetic figures, dramatically positioned, were also designed to fire Mieke’s as well as Piet’s interest in the distant past. In this way, while telling a general story of social development, the Gallo-Roman Museum gives it a human face.

Socio-active experiencers like Mieke are particularly susceptible to atmosphere. The design by Kortekaas and De Gregorio makes for atmospheric galleries, heightened by clever use of lighting.

Gust finds no shortage of panels of text providing in-depth information presented like articles in a newspaper with a headline followed by several paragraphs. Visitors like Gust usually read the whole panel of text, while they are structured in such a way that people like Mieke can restrict themselves to the core content.

Traditional and digital maps provide Gust with a glimpse of the world beyond the Limburg region. Where a topic is the subject of scientific debate, the museum often presents several hypotheses, often in the form of short films. They, too, were made mainly with people like Gust in mind.

Despite the large number of items on display in the Gallo-Roman Museum, the showcases never look crowded. The museum decided not to present a large number of the same type of object. Consequently, the objects are allowed plenty of space to come into their own. These decisions meet the expectations of Gust, Mieke and Piet.

Conclusion

The Gallo-Roman Museum succeeded in making the new permanent exhibition accessible to the public as they might have been.

The end result

The museum chose a clear chronological path through the galleries. Crucial events were summed up in several core sentences on instantly recognisable information stands. A clear indication of time is always provided. Consequently visitors cannot miss anything and always retain an overview. These decisions did not stem directly from the audience research. However, the research data did strengthen the working group in its belief that the chosen structure was the right one.

For Piet and his younger friends the museum chose simple computer-operated interactives and animations. Rather than placing the screens in a separate ‘Children’s Zone’, they were integrated into the presentation as a whole. These applications also appeal to people like Mieke who often visit a museum with children, as the productions help parents explain difficult content to their children in a fun way. However, it soon became apparent that all the adults use them extensively, even when they are not accompanied by children.

The Gallo-Roman Museum also wanted to offer ‘auto-active experiencers’ like Piet the occasional opportunity to touch replicas of objects, again something the ‘socio-active experiencers’ and even the ‘observing information seekers’ had indicated they like to do. The same applies to the models which are another way of bringing the distant past to life. In other words, options which were chosen for one target group, often prove beneficial to the others.

Certainly for Mieke it was important to integrate information about daily life. The museum did this by
at large. Visitors appear to appreciate the consistent educational approach. They make use of and visibly enjoy the various ‘gateways’ to the distant past open to them. And they obviously feel at ease in the museum. No research has yet been done to establish whether the museum visit really does help visitors understand the how, what and why of social transformations. However, the museum did carry out extensive quantitative research to assess how people rate the exhibition, both as a whole and the different aspects of it. As many as 60% of visitors indicated that they would like to visit the exhibition again because they found it fascinating and informative. Moreover, in addition to claiming to have learned something, they also appear to have had a pleasant and relaxing time and to have enjoyed the atmosphere. The most successful gallery is the one about prehistoric man. It is the overwhelming favourite among all age groups and educational levels and both among frequent and less frequent museum-goers. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the target group approach was most forcefully applied in this gallery.

The Gallo-Roman Museum believes that the audience research made a very real contribution to its success. You cannot expect wondrous results from audience research. The decisions made by the museum, independently of the research findings, were at least equally prescriptive.

Useful publications

40

Introduction

The Riverside Museum project began in 2004 and, following the opening of the museum on 21 June 2011, was completed in October 2011.

The purpose of the £74 million project (£97M) was to build a brand new museum to house Glasgow’s internationally significant transport and technology collection, which was previously on display at the Museum of Transport (MoT). Managed by Glasgow Life on behalf of Glasgow City Council, the Riverside Museum is located on the north bank of the River Clyde. This site has been chosen for its historical connection with Glasgow’s ship-building legacy and for its capacity to house the Glenlee, a Clyde-built tall ship. In fact, the external landscape is where the visitor experience really begins.

The Riverside Museum attracted over 1.5 million visitors in its first year of opening. It has also received critical (international) acclaim and has been awarded with the European Museum of the Year Award 2013. The visitor research carried out during the lifetime of the project is one of the contributing factors to this success.

Story-display approach

The chosen philosophy of the new Riverside Museum is that of the object-based, visitor-centred, interdisciplinary, storytelling museum. The museum staff believes this approach can reinvigorate museums intellectually and imaginatively. This ethos was embedded within the overarching principles of the project to create a museum based on the twin principles of significance of the collections and of visitor interest.

The interpretive technique used to achieve this is the story-display approach, pioneered at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery (Glasgow). Within the Riverside Museum are a total of 120 story displays, allowing visitors the opportunity to browse the collections and objects. Some of the larger objects, such as locomotives, have a number of story displays around them. Stories focused on physically smaller objects are more discrete. The story, objects, and interpretative method were all carefully considered to meet the interests and needs of the specific audiences. Each story display has one key message, which is aimed at one of the museum’s five target audiences: families, teenagers, schools, under-fives and sensory impaired visitors. Each story is communicated using mechanisms appropriate to the target audience: text, graphics, digital media, gameplay.

Embedding Visitor Needs

Drawing on the successful use of visitor research to inform the re-development of Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery (2002-2006) the importance of embedding visitor needs was recognised from the outset, and a
The panel members were recruited through existing contacts (e.g. frequent visitors to MoT) and through advertising. A formal constitution was created to set out the role of the panels and what the panel members could expect from their involvement.

Although the Riverside Museum project was the primary driver, providing all the resource required, it was decided that the panels’ role would extend across Glasgow Museums, their mission to ensure that the widest range of people will enjoy, learn and be inspired by their visit. And members were encouraged to:

- advise Glasgow Museums on specific aspects of service delivery including, but not limited to, improving access, developing lifelong learning opportunities and enabling wider community participation;
- provide specific input into the key decision making stages of the current major projects being undertaken by Glasgow Museums;
- act as advocates for both Glasgow Museums, and more specifically the current major projects, to their representative communities;
- provide an effective link between Glasgow Museums and the wider community.

In order to reflect the five target audiences, it was agreed that five different panels were required:

- Education Panel: 22 members representing different educational levels, from pre-school to further education; Membership included educational development specialists, teachers, college lecturers, and national education advisors;
- Community Panel: 15-20 members representing the local community and the wider Glasgow community. Membership included frequent visitors to the previous
dedicated staff resource allocated. A Visitor Studies Curator was appointed in 2005 as a core member of the strategic management team, with an equal decision-making role, alongside conservation, design, and content team members. In addition, a full-time Visitor Studies Research Assistant supported the role, along with an allocated budget.

The key functions of this Visitor Studies Team were:

- programming and delivering all in-house visitor research: front-end, formative, prototyping, evaluation and consultation;
- commissioning external research consultants as and when required;
- co-ordinating and facilitating the Glasgow Museums’ Advisory Panels;
- acting as the audience advocates both internally and externally;
- undertaking desk-based literature reviews to help inform knowledge of visitors;
- disseminating research as appropriate to the project team, Glasgow museums staff and externally through published papers and presentations.

During the lifetime of the project, a total of 10 pieces of external research were commissioned. The in-house team carried out 43 pieces of research: exit surveys to the MoT to profile museum visitors, understand their motivations for visiting, identify barriers for access and test content development proposals for the new museum (2003 and 2005); face-to-face interviews to test the level of engagement with interpretative themes developed by the content team (2005); observation research to test the effectiveness of a design solution to discourage visitors from touching vehicles (2007); focus groups with teens and families to evaluate text developed for story displays (2009).

Rather than discussing one specific piece of visitor research, of which there are many to choose from, the focus in this article will be on the use of the Glasgow Museums’ Advisory Panels.

Glasgow Museums’ Advisory Panels

Purpose

Glasgow Museums’ first Advisory Panels were established in 2004 to help with the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery refurbishment. In 2005, the Riverside Museum recognised the value of this model, and established five panels that would represent the project’s target audiences. The panels were used as a mechanism to carry out visitor research and deliver community engagement throughout the lifetime of the project and, hopefully, beyond.

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Membership included frequent visitors to the previous
Although these panels did not match exactly the target audiences, it did enable access to individuals or those with specialist knowledge about an audience. For example, there is not a panel for under-fives’ audience but there were members of the Education Panel who were nursery school teachers. To obtain information about the schools audience Riverside could access pupils via one of the Youth Panels or access education experts via the Education Panel.

Riverside Project Consultation Process – Advisory Panels

- Access Panel: 15-20 members representing all main disabilities – membership included people from organisations representing disability as well as people with disabilities;
- Teen Panel: 12 members aged 12-17 from the local secondary school;
- Junior Panel: 16 members aged 8-11 from two different primary schools.
assisted with everything from content development to software prototyping to evaluating existing services. By representing the museum’s target audiences, it meant the project team could easily, quickly and cheaply carry out visitor research, using them as a ready-made focus group, facilitated by the visitor studies team. It is worth noting that the panels’ activities were dependent on the needs of the project, rather than driven by the members. For example:

- Consultation: Access Panel – Internal Drawings: Accessible toilet
  When the Access Panel was consulted on the architectural plans, a key finding was that although it met building regulations, some members felt the disabled toilet would still not be large enough to house an adult changing table and winch, both required by their service users. Feedback was passed to the architects, and the decision was made to increase the size of the toilet to accommodate adults with severe disabilities. By consulting at this stage, the Visitors Studies Team was able to influence the architects and senior management, and influence change, despite a cost implication.

- Evaluation: Community Panel - Guided Tour Evaluation
  The Community Panel was involved in the evaluation of guided tours on offer at the MoT and Kelvingrove Museum. As a result, the panels helped inform the type of tours Riverside Museum offers.

- Prototyping: Teen Panel - Bike Wall Game Play
  As part of audiovisual concept testing, the Teen Panel worked with the content team to test the game play using paper mock-ups for one of Riverside’s key attractions: a wall of motorcycles which engages users

Facilitation and Management

From the outset, each of the panels was managed by an appointed Learning and Access Curator. However, in 2007, their management was passed to the Visitor Studies Curator. There were two primary drivers for this change: the curators were required to focus on content development and it was felt that engagement with the panels would be more consistent, therefore improving the dialogue and outcomes.

To date, the process for engagement between the panels and the project team was ad hoc, so a new process was put in place to help to define engagement (see diagram at page 45).

Although the intention was to have a minimum of three meetings per year with each panel, this would depend on the phase of the project as it was vital not to waste panel members time by ‘having a meeting for a meeting’s sake’.

The other key factor was to ensure the engagement with the panels was meaningful and not tokenistic. Panel members were given feedback at the next meeting and were informed about the outcomes of their input.

Finally, it is worth noting that although the panels helped to influence the project, they were not the primary decision-makers. If conflict occurred between the panels’ feedback and the project staff, the issue would be taken to the management team for the final decision.

A Two-Way Dialogue

Essentially, the panels acted as a mechanism to enable the project staff to have a dialogue with visitors. They
in a game similar to ‘Top Trumps’. The session helped
the content team to assess the level of engagement
with the game, find out the level of understanding of its
purpose, and identify any barriers to engagement for
future development.

**Case Study: The Junior Panel Testing Clippers Story Display**

The Junior Panel was established through existing
contacts and relationship-building with local primary
schools. As a result, two local primary schools each
agreed eight pupils could attend meetings at the
museum up to five times a year.

The members were selected in different ways. At one
school, the headmaster chose the pupils who would
become members. At the other, the pupils had to
apply, and were then interviewed for selection; a tough
process for eight-year-olds. All the pupils remained on
the panel during their time at school, so each year up to
four members were recruited.

Like all the Panels, their input was influential throughout
the project’s lifetime. An example of this was testing the
concept for a story display called ‘Clippers’. Aimed at
a school audience, the display featured model clipper
ships from the collection. The key message for the story
was: “Tea clipper ships were designed to transport tea
as quickly as possible to London from China. Great
prestige and profits were rewarded for the first tea
clipper home.”

The content team had an idea to tell this story using a
multi-player digital game, where each player selects a
historically accurate clipper ship, a crew and captain,
and then navigates their ship home to London, whilst
avoiding various hazards at sea. The choices the players
made at the start (e.g. type of ship) would influence the
outcome of the journey. However, the content team
had no idea if this would work, or if the target audience
(schools) would understand the key message of the
story in this format.

The Visitor Studies Team arranged for the Junior Panel
to test the concept in three sessions.

**Session 1 - Testing the Concept**

The first session took place with only half of the panel
members. The other half worked on another story
display, and sought to find out:

- Did they like it?
- What didn’t they like about it?
- Did they understand the purpose of the game
(key message of the story)?
- What changes would they make?
- Would they make the connections between their
choices and the outcomes?
- Would they want to play it?

At the start of the first session, the overall premise for
the story was explained to the group using prompts
(images and captions) to help them to understand the
story context. Next a quick brain-storming activity was
facilitated to see what they thought a ship would need to
bring the tea back. Fortunately, many of them suggested
some of the elements included in the next activity.

In the next task, the team wanted to see if the young
people understood the purpose of the decision-making elements of the game. They were given a choice of eight categories, e.g. How many crew members will you carry? Each item was accompanied by some explanatory notes.

**Item: Crew**
A strong, hardworking crew would be good.
A crew that is cheap to hire, it would be more money for you!
A younger crew might be cheaper.
An experienced crew might have good combat skills, but might be more expensive.
You’d need crew that could fix the ship.
You’d need a medic and chefs and cooks.

The aim of the activity was to find out which of these choices they understood, how they would prioritise them for inclusion in the game. Using a technique called pinpointing (see Appendix 2) the group was asked to suggest their own ‘choices’ too. These were clustered and then ranked by the group with regards to their priorities for inclusion.

The next activity was to test if they understood the relationship between a choice they had made and its consequences on the journey home. For this activity, the full group was sub-divided smaller groups (3/4), and the facilitator enabled the discussion with a simple question and answer technique.

Q. If you encounter strong winds during your voyage, what might happen?
A. Wind could blow you off track, or into rocks.
Men might fall overboard.
A heavier ship would help as you would be stronger.

Finally, the group was asked to write down how they would describe the game to their friends. The purpose of this was to test if they understood the overall concept and their engagement levels.

“To play the game you must choose things which would help your clipper to get to Britain before another clipper. Watch out for hazards like storms, pirates, rocks and reefs, illness and icebergs. Think about how much tea you will carry how much crew you will take. Will you take spares? What kind of people can be on your crew? Hope you enjoy it!” (Katie, aged 10)

The results of this session were written up and reported to the content team, with the findings indicating that the concept would work the target audience.

**Session 2 - Playing the Game**

The next stage was to test the game itself with the second half of the panel, with no prior knowledge of the story display.

To do this, a board-game style mock-up was created using the wall space in the meeting room as the ‘board’, and a dice to ‘play’ it. The panel members played the game in teams, with the team observing their behaviour and recording their discussions to establish understanding, enjoyment and engagement levels (see Appendix 3).

The results from the second session suggested that the game-play worked reasonably well but the group felt it could be improved by being able to name their ship, by not imposing a time limit (they all wanted to be able to return home with or without their crew or tea), and finally by providing a different obstacle for every choice.
Riverside to continue to shape the content changes, and improve the visitor experience. One method this is achieved by is via the digital customer feedback screens located throughout the exhibition space. Visitors can complete an open-ended comments field, or can choose to complete an online survey. The flexibility of the content management system allows surveys to be designed, with both open-ended and closed questions, by staff for any piece of research making it less time-consuming data collection that face-to-face surveys.

Finally, the role of the Advisory Panels has also grown in its scope, with all members opting to stay involved and contributing to the development of other projects and programmes delivered by Glasgow Museums.

The findings of a summative evaluation done by an external consultant have identified a number of lessons learned including:
- Panels can play an important role in a number of areas of project design and development.
- Panel members would have liked to have had more input in a project development perspective.
- A wide ranging panel membership contributes to a healthy debate.
- Consideration should be given therefore to a time dependant model, as opposed to having all panels active throughout the whole project.

And also:
- Effective community engagement requires significant resources and commitment from project staff and long term by Glasgow Life.

Session 3 - Software Prototyping

As with all the content produced for Riverside Museum, the software had to be tested with audiences during the development phase. This meant that the software developers for the game-play had to create a suitable environment within their offices.

A year after the Junior Panel took part in the second session, the team arranged for them to test the prototype version of the interactive. The game was reasonably well developed to enable them to play it, but one of the main issues for concern was if they would understand the on-screen instructions.

As well as observing them playing the game, each panel member was asked to complete a questionnaire after they had played it (see Appendix 4). By doing this individually, we were able to process the data to identify the common themes based on quantitative results rather than qualitative, to provide stronger evidence to the software developers who had to make the changes.

Conclusions

The visitor research carried out during the lifetime of the project is one of the contributing factors to the success of the Riverside Museum, which has now attracted a total of 2.2 million visitors in less than two years since opening.

However, the journey does not end here, the Visitor Studies Curator post (responsible for all Glasgow Museums) has now been made a permanent one. A programme of summative evaluation has begun at Riverside to continue to shape the content changes, and improve the visitor experience. One method this is achieved by is via the digital customer feedback screens located throughout the exhibition space. Visitors can complete an open-ended comments field, or can choose to complete an online survey. The flexibility of the content management system allows surveys to be designed, with both open-ended and closed questions, by staff for any piece of research making it less time-consuming data collection that face-to-face surveys.

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- A wide ranging panel membership contributes to a healthy debate.
- Consideration should be given therefore to a time dependant model, as opposed to having all panels active throughout the whole project.

And also:
- Effective community engagement requires significant resources and commitment from project staff and long term by Glasgow Life.
- The establishment of the panels takes a long time and much of the early work is based around relationship building.
- Flexibility in terms of the timings and locations of meetings will help to ensure that a wider group of people could be engaged.
- Panel members appreciate clarity on the context of what they have been asked to do as well as being kept regularly updated.
- Ensuring that meetings are varied, interactive and engaging helps to keep all members enthused.
- Ensuring the right size of the group is important to the success of the panels.

As more and more museums face funding cuts and economic uncertainty, the role of visitor studies can help to ensure limited resources are applied for success by understanding your visitor’s needs, and applying them to the visitor experience.

The commercial sector has been using market research for product development for most of the 20th century, and museums need to learn from this and apply the same principles.

After all, why do museums do what they do? Without visitors, they will simply become collections storage.

Useful publications

Useful websites

All information about the Riverside project, especially visitor research, and the Advisory Panels, you can find on: www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/projects/riverside-museum

As well as the research published by Glasgow Museums, other UK organisations who share their research include the V&A, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum and the National Maritime Museum:

http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/v/visitor-research/
http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/visitor-research/index.html
http://www.rmg.co.uk/leisure-travel-tourism/resources/visitor-research/

The Visitor Studies Group is another source for sharing research in the UK, and across Europe:
http://visitors.org.uk/

Today audience research is an essential part of a professional museum’s activity. The authors of this publication firmly believe the gathering of information about the public and applying it to their practice creates added value. This certainly applies to a radical exercise like the remodelling of a permanent exhibition, particularly if its public is diverse. Sam Groves: “Many museum professionals understand their subject area and the collections they work with, but may not understand the needs of audiences when interpreting their expert knowledge to visitors. I think this is where audience research can have a huge impact.”

There can be other spinoffs from audience research. In the case of Forssa Museum the research initiatives certainly increased the urban community’s involvement in the museum. Kristiina Huttunen and Sanna Kattelus: “As the experiences of the ‘Vorsammuseum 3.0’ project show, efforts to involve the public promote community, particularly in small towns, and as a result strengthen the relationship between the museum and its public.” Hence the authors’ reference to ‘engagement campaigns’. Only time will tell if the ‘engagement achieved is lasting. In any case, even after the opening, the museum plans to mount regular public-friendly campaigns and events to ensure the museum continues to attract citizens, engage their interest and retain their (emotional) ties with the museum. Conducting audience research still can have other consequences. Not only does it provide relevant data, but it can also raise awareness levels in a museum. It can lead to an understanding, also among members of the scientific department, that more thought and attention needs to be given to different types of visitor. This shared attitude is a vital part of making an exhibition attractive to a diversified public. Sam Groves: “I think the biggest challenge is to convince museums and their staff that visitors are as important as the collections.”

Yet you cannot expect wondrous results from audience research. It is only one of the tools needed to make a better exhibition. For example, it is of course always useful to make an internal analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the previous presentation, to consult literature and to visit other museums. It is also important that museums continue to have confidence in their instincts and in their years of experience.

The three case studies clearly show that the museum professionals make the final decisions and do not unquestioningly carry out what the public prescribes. And that is just as it should be. In any case, not all the ideas are practicable. There may be obstacles of a financial or other nature. Kristiina Huttunen and Sanna Kattelus: “Not all perspectives and opinions received were feasible. The customers’ awareness of the realities of museum work was not always up to date.”

At the same time account does have to be taken of the findings. If there is no support for this there is little

Conclusions
Bart Distelmans
sense in channelling time and/or resources into research initiatives. In other words: audience research must be more than just vainish. The organisation must be open to being guided by the public to some extent and to try out and adopt ideas which have been put forward. Sam Groves: “The Visitor Studies Team not only carried out visitor research, but equally important, was the audience advocate, speaking on behalf of the visitors within the organisation, and having a real, rather than a tokenistic, impact.”

Even if for one reason or another some of the research findings are not entirely to the liking of certain staff members or designers, they must at least be discussed and if possible honoured. For example, it transpired after the Gallo-Roman Museum’s research findings had been published that not everyone was convinced of the need for more visitor groups. Some, both employees and external designers, favoured restricting themselves to one group. For various reasons they wanted to go all out to satisfy the classic museum visitor. Members of the working group responsible for education eventually won the day, albeit after what was for them a difficult and sometimes even rather demotivating process. Be this as it may, the Forssa Museum, the Gallo-Roman Museum and the Riverside Museum found implementing the audience research a fascinating learning process. That said, ‘audience research’ and ‘taking visitors into account’ are not synonymous with ‘targeting everyone’. Kristiina Huttunen and Sanna Kattelus: “It is possible that a longer period of consideration would have generated questions that could have been used more extensively or thoroughy.”

All museums strive to target hard-to-reach audiences, often through resource-intensive outreach programmes, were they succeed in engaging the museum with a small group of participants. But is this the best use of resources? Their visitors, before trying to get it right for all those people who are not that interested. All museums in meetings we often continue to speak and think in terms of the visitor. What is more, we all continue to believe that we are the ultimate example of that so-called universal visitor.

So it is important to think and act, bearing in mind the information about the learning styles, wishes and expectations of different groups. It may be a more complex and time-consuming way of designing an exhibition, but it is desirable. It is important to take the time to think everything through and implement it carefully, though in practice this is not always possible. Kristiina Huttunen and Sanna Kattelus: “It is possible that a longer period of consideration would have generated questions that could have been used more extensively or thoroughy.”

This thought process, but also the implementation of the research requires some experience or affinity with research methodology. The same applies if the museum decides to use the services of an external bureau. Sam Groves: “External research is expensive, and still requires a level of understanding by the client to ensure you get the best value for money.”

Of course it is desirable to have a sizeable budget and sufficient staff. The Gallo-Roman Museum spent £70,000 Euros, including VAT. Sam Groves: “If I had commissioned a consultant to plan and deliver eight focus groups, I would have expected to pay between £8,000 and £10, 000 (+/- 10,500 Euros).” The Riverside Museum organised and coordinated the focus groups itself but employed two people permanently for a number of years for this and other research.

The Forssa Museum shows that it is also possible to conduct worthwhile research projects on a smaller budget. Kristiina Huttunen and Sanna Kattelus: “According to a rough estimate, the research took five to six months of the working time of one person.” And also: “Official and precisely formulated studies were abandoned from the start. They would have created problems with regard to the time spent and the scope of the study. We decided to collect opinions and points of view in connection with the involvement measures as part of the effort to transform the Museum into an open, communal organisation of tradition”. Or as Sam Groves says: “A large scale, face-to-face quantitative survey is resource-heavy and will be time-consuming, while carrying out a ‘quick and dirty’ self-selecting survey may give you all the information you need.”

Finally, does responding to the wishes and expectations of the public automatically generate more visitors? That is very difficult to prove as often scores of other elements such as the architecture of the building, communication and admission price also come into play. Yet all the authors believe that at the very least a public-friendly approach leads to greater appreciation on the part of the visitors. Sam Groves: “I strongly believe that by making the project and the museum visitor-focused from the outset, has helped to develop a product meeting the needs of the visitors, and both the visitor numbers and, more importantly, the visitor feedback since opening provides some evidence to support this.” By increasing the chance of different groups of visitors having a meaningful, worthwhile visit, you also make it more likely that they will visit your museum again and that others will follow through word-of-mouth.
INTRODUCTION

Face-to-face

I’m …….. from the Gallo-Roman Museum. We are going to give our museum a complete overhaul. So we are conducting a survey to find out what people think about museums and what they expect of a museum. This survey is very important to the museum. It takes about 20 minutes to answer the questions. There are no wrong answers. All we are interested in is your opinion. Are you prepared to help us?

A. Have you taken part in a study about museums in the last 12 months?
   YES ............................................................ 1  => STOP
   NO ............................................................. 2 

B. Do you or does someone else in your household work in any of the following sectors?
   Advertising/Promotion ................................... 1  => STOP
   Marketing ..................................................... 2  => STOP
   Market research ........................................... 3  => STOP
   Journalism / Public relations ......................... 4  => STOP
   Museum ....................................................... 5  => STOP
   None of these ............................................... 6 

C. Apart from this museum, do you ever visit museums or exhibitions about the past here in Belgium or abroad?
   YES ................................................................ 1  => STOP
   NO ................................................................ 2 

Appendix 1
Gallo-Roman Museum – Sample questionnaire: adults

D. QUESTIONNAIRE

In this interview we would like to find out what your expectations and preferences are when visiting an archaeological museum or a historical exhibition. Bearing in mind, we are talking about a history or archaeology museum. There are no right or wrong answers. What matters is your opinion.

1. In a museum are you looking to:
   A. experience something and relax   Yes / No
   B. learn something     Yes / No
   C. be with family or friends      Yes / No
   D. enjoy the peacefulness and soak up the atmosphere Yes / No
   E. reflect on life      Yes / No
   F. admire the exhibits      Yes / No

   If you have given more than 2 answers, which 2 would you choose above the others?
   (interviewer: write down the letters)
   1. …………….
   2. …………….

2. Do you prepare in advance for what you are going to see in the museum?
   e.g. at home you read up on the exhibits or on the topics dealt with in the museum
   A. Yes: How? ………………………………
   B. No

3. When you arrive at the museum:
   A. do you want to find an overview of everything there is to see and experience
   B. do you want to work out a route according to your interests
   C. do you simply want to start your visit and see what comes along

4. In a museum:
   A. are you usually only interested in the highlights and the broad outlines
   B. do you usually want to see everything

5. In a historical museum:
   A. do you want to empathise with history
14. In a museum do you mainly look for:
   □ A. facts and figures  
e.g. When was Caesar born and who were his mistresses?
   □ B. the why and wherefore of things  
e.g. Why did Caesar conquer our region?

15. In an historical or archaeological museum, besides learning something about the past, you are also interested in:
   □ A. finding out about the world of archaeology and excavations
   □ B. finding out how the exhibitions are put together
   □ C. establishing links between past and present
   □ D. none of these things

16. How do you prefer to obtain information during your visit? Please answer “Yes, definitely” or “No, not really”.
   □ A. a guided tour with a tour guide  
   □ B. a brochure
   □ C. panels of text
   □ D. drawings and photographs
   □ E. maps
   □ F. audio equipment (audio-guide)
   □ G. sound recordings
   □ H. films
   □ I. models of buildings or cities
   □ J. multimedia and computers
   □ K. other, what? ……………….
   If you gave more than 2 yes answers: You answered yes to … (interviewer: read out the respondent’s yes answers). Which two are most important to you? (interviewer: write down the letters)
   □ 1. …………….
   □ 2. …………….
17. If you had a guided tour, what sort of guide would you choose?
☐ A. a guide who provides all the necessary information; you listen carefully
☐ B. a guide who gives all the necessary information, but who also asks you questions and with whom you can have a discussion

18. How should the objects on show, such as a pot, be presented?
☐ A. the pot should be shown on its own; its beauty is the most important thing
☐ B. you should show what people did with the pot; what it was used for is the most important thing

19. What appeals to you most?
☐ A. trying on a knight’s suit of armour and feeling how heavy it really is
☐ B. reading a text which explains that knights were not heroes in the Middle Ages

20. What appeals to you most?
☐ A. admiring the beauty of objects and reading interesting texts about them
☐ B. touching the objects and familiarising yourself with the different materials

21. When you visit a historical museum, is:
☐ A. exhibiting one example of an object enough for you? (e.g. 1 pot, 1 glass vase, 1 arrowhead)
☐ B. exhibiting several examples of an object desirable? (e.g. 10 similar pots, 10 similar vases)

22. Which do you prefer to do?
☐ A. attend a talk about the Romans’ exotic religion?
☐ B. make a model of a typical Roman god?

23. Do you want an historical museum to tie in with what you already know about the historical period?
☐ A. Yes
☐ B. No

24. Which of the following descriptions appeals to you most? In each case choose one of the two possibilities. What do you regard as the ideal historical museum?
☐ resembles school ☐ or resembles an amusement park
☐ informative ☐ or emotive

25. In a historical museum:
☐ A. are you looking to feel and experience history?
☐ B. are you looking to acquire an understanding of history?

26. What behaviour do you identify with most?
☐ A. you play it by ear and allow yourself to be led by atmosphere. You walk from one attractive display to another and are not afraid to miss things out.
☐ B. you rely on your judgment. You follow the route through the museum step by step and in logical order. You don’t like missing things out.

27. In the museum is a short film which explains how in prehistory a boy of 12 protected himself from the cold. There are also animal skins lying around which you can touch. Which behaviour do you identify with most?
☐ A. you watch the short film and think about how people kept themselves warm
☐ B. you watch the short film and continue to reflect on that boy’s difficult life
☐ C. you watch the short film and only try on animal skins to find out how warm they really are
☐ D. you immediately try on the animal skins and draw your own conclusions

28. What makes some historical museums fascinating and fun? What does it depend on?
☐ resembles a historical novel ☐ or resembles an encyclopaedia containing historical facts

What sort of layout do you prefer in the galleries?
☐ surprises ☐ or overview
☐ large surveyable space ☐ or small convivial nooks

What interests you most?
☐ stories about people ☐ or exhibits
☐ interesting theories ☐ or practical information
☐ the past ☐ or the relationship between past and present

What information should a museum provide?
☐ one opinion ☐ or several opinions
☐ questions with one clear answer ☐ or open questions
☐ things as they really were ☐ or things presented with some imagination

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☐ C. you watch the short film and only try on animal skins to find out how warm they really are
☐ D. you immediately try on the animal skins and draw your own conclusions

28. What makes some historical museums fascinating and fun? What does it depend on?
Interviewer: continue to ask questions: And what else do you consider important?
When do you consider a visit to a museum a success?

Example of a successful museum: ......................... in ..................

E. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

• Respondent’s age:

• Gender:
  □ Male
  □ Female

• What are your main hobbies or interests?
  1.
  2.
  3.

• Town of your main place of residence: ........ Postcode:

• Region:

• What is your highest qualification?
  □ Primary school
  □ Lower secondary school
  □ Higher secondary school
  □ Higher non-university education
  □ University
  □ Other: ...........................................

• With whom did you visit the (last) museum?
  □ Alone
  □ In a group

  If in a group:
  □ Partner
  □ With children only
  □ Partner and children
  □ Friends
  □ Organisation
  □ School
  □ Other:

• Had you already visited the Gallo-Roman Museum?
  □ Yes
  □ No

• How often do you visit a historical museum [annually]?:
  ... times

• Do you regularly visit the same historical museum? (min. once every 2 years)
  □ Yes
    □ Mainly for the permanent collection
    □ Mainly for the temporary exhibitions
  □ No

• Do you usually go into the shop?
  □ Yes
  □ No

• Does your visit to a museum usually include the museum café?
  □ Yes
  □ No

• How long should a museum visit last if it is to be interesting and enjoyable? (not including the café)
  ..... minutes       ..... hours

Interviewer: continue to ask questions: And what else do you consider important?
When do you consider a visit to a museum a success?

Example of a successful museum: ......................... in ..................

E. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

• Respondent’s age:

• Gender:
  □ Male
  □ Female

• What are your main hobbies or interests?
  1.
  2.
  3.

• Town of your main place of residence: ........ Postcode:

• Region:

• What is your highest qualification?
  □ Primary school
  □ Lower secondary school
  □ Higher secondary school
  □ Higher non-university education
  □ University
  □ Other: ...........................................

• With whom did you visit the (last) museum?
  □ Alone
  □ In a group

  If in a group:
  □ Partner
  □ With children only
  □ Partner and children
  □ Friends
  □ Organisation
  □ School
  □ Other:

• Had you already visited the Gallo-Roman Museum?
  □ Yes
  □ No

• How often do you visit a historical museum [annually]?:
  ... times

• Do you regularly visit the same historical museum? (min. once every 2 years)
  □ Yes
    □ Mainly for the permanent collection
    □ Mainly for the temporary exhibitions
  □ No

• Do you usually go into the shop?
  □ Yes
  □ No

• Does your visit to a museum usually include the museum café?
  □ Yes
  □ No

• How long should a museum visit last if it is to be interesting and enjoyable? (not including the café)
  ..... minutes       ..... hours
• Do you have the internet at home?
  □ Yes
  □ No

• Would you like to contribute to developing a new museum concept for the Gallo-Roman Museum in the future?
  If yes, name and telephone number, please: ….

INTERVIEWER’S COMMENTS:

Appendix 2
Riverside Museum - Facilitation Techniques: Pinpointing

Pinpointing is a great facilitation tool for eliciting and managing a large amount of data from a group and processing it efficiently. It is also a visual tool, allowing the groups thinking to be displayed for all to see.

Stage 1 - Set the question
Set your question – as with all group research, the right question is vital if you wish to achieve your goal.


Step 2 - Card instructions
Inform the group that you will be using a process called pinpointing and you will be inviting them to capture their ideas on cards which they will then cluster into groups/themes. Give them the instructions for writing the cards. Consider including the instructions visibly.

Instructions for writing the card (include on a flip-chart or write on the cards)
• One idea per card
• Bullet statements (want to capture the essence of the idea, if people do not understand they will have a chance to explain later)
• Write this size (demonstrate by writing on a card- black marker, and large)
• Don’t worry about spelling mistakes, this isn’t an exam!

Step 3 - Writing the cards
Hand out the cards, and ask the group to write down their responses to the question. Remind them of the instructions as you do this. You can give them between 2-4 cards per person, depending how many people are in the group. Remember the more cards you give them, the longer it will take to process.

Step 4 - Instructions of clustering
Collect all of the cards and shuffle them. Give them the instructions for clustering. Again, you can have the instructions written visibly.
Step 5 - Clustering
Put the first card on the board or wall. Take the next card, and read it to the group. Ask them to tell you where to put the card - the same cluster or a new cluster. Repeat this process with each card.

This process of clustering the cards should generate some debate, which is all part of the process. It is worth reminding the group that the idea is not to create one large cluster, there will be connections between the clusters anyway, but the aim is to catch the emerging themes in relation to the topic/question.

Step 6 - Review the clusters
Once all of the cards have been placed, ask the group to look at them again. Is there anything that stands out? Do they think all of the cards are in the right clusters? This is their opportunity to move cards, decide to split a cluster into two or bring two clusters together.

Step 7 - Naming the clusters
Ask for one volunteer to help you with this. Their job is to write the titles (on a different coloured paper). Taking one cluster at a time, ask the group to come up with a title that captures the essence of the card of the cards. This should also create some discussion and disagreement. Use your role as the facilitator to help the group to make their choices. Place the title next to the cluster.

Step 8 - Key themes
The cluster titles represent the key themes that have emerged from the group in response to your question. For front end evaluation, it is possible to quantify this information further. This will provide an idea of what the group feels is the most/least important theme.

Step 9 - Ranking the themes
Using the cluster title cards, you need to move this to a separate wall. On this wall, the following headings will be set up:
- Topic (theme)
- Votes
- Total
- Priority

The aim is that each member of the group will be able to vote for the ones they agree with the most. The number of votes will depend on the number of participants; however, I would suggest giving each person the same number of votes as you did cards. It should be reiterated that they can choose to weight their choices by voting for the same theme with all their votes. Using sticky dots helps to make this process transparent, but you can choose how they cast votes.

When all the votes have been cast, count the votes and total them. Once you have done this, you can put them in order of priority, or top most important/least important.

Finally, ask the group how they feel about the ranking order. Does this represent their overall views? Take a picture of the walls to record the findings.
Appendix 3
Riverside Museum - Prototyping Clippers: Observation Sheet

GAME 1 / 2 (Circle)

GAME 1 Choice
Ship
More crew or more cargo?
Additional supplies
Specialist crewman
Captain

GAME 2 Choice
Ship
More crew or more cargo?
Additional supplies
Specialist crewman
Captain

Specific points to look out for
Players' responses

Do users understand the instructions?
Are there any issues which immediately become apparent regarding use of the game?
How long does it take each player to make their selections (clipper, captain etc.)? Is there any confusion surrounding this?
Do players recognise that they are competing against each other?
Do players look at both screens during play?
How do players make their clipper move?
Do players notice effect light and dark grey channels have on speed?
Do players remain engaged throughout game play?
How do players respond to prompts that appear during play?
Do players try and avoid hazards en route?
Do players stop steering when they reach the UK after screen zooms in?
How do players react when winner is announced?
Any other observations?

Appendix 4
Riverside Museum - Prototyping Clippers: Q&A

Clippers Prototyping Survey

NAME:
AGE:

1. If you had to describe the game to a friend, how would you describe it?

2. Did you understand how to play the game? (Where the instructions easy to follow?)
   - Yes
   - No (Why not? ..............................................................................................................)

3. Thinking about playing the game, how would you rate it? (Please circle)
   - Very easy
   - Easy
   - Okay
   - Quite difficult
   - Very difficult

4. Thinking about making your ship sail. How would you rate it? (Please circle)
   - Very easy
   - Easy
   - Okay
   - Quite difficult
   - Very difficult

5. Looking at the graphic below, can you tell me which bits are the following: hazards, player's ship markers and location markers?

6a. Looking at the graphic below, can you tell me which bits are the following: countdown clock, crew selection, cargo selection, the clipper you have selected, the supplies you can take, the crewmen you can take, the captain you choose?

   Game 1 Choice Game 2 Choice
   Ship
   More crew or more cargo?
   Additional supplies
   Specialist crewman
   Captain

6b. If you can remember, can you tell me what which ones you picked in each game and why you made your choices?

   Game 1 Choice Game 2 Choice
   Ship
   More crew or more cargo?
   Additional supplies
   Specialist crewman
   Captain
6c. Did you have enough time to make your choices?
- Yes
- No

7a. During the game, did any pop ups appear on your screen?
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

7b. If yes, in your own words can you tell me what they did?
................................................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................................................

8. What did you think of the length of this game?
- Too long
- Just right
- Too short

9. What is your overall opinion of this game?
- I really enjoyed playing it
- It was ok
- I didn’t like playing it

10. If you visited the Riverside Museum, do you think you would want to play this game?
- Yes
- No
Bart Distelmans has been with the Gallo-Roman Museum since 2002. He spent many years working on its planned expansion, and particularly on developing the concept for the new permanent exhibition. He was also responsible for audience research. Bart now spends most of his time developing the concept and producing content for temporary exhibitions, educational programmes and audiovisuals as well as managing the museum’s communications.

Sam Groves is currently working for Glasgow Life, which manages arts, archives, libraries, museums, community centres and sports for the City of Glasgow. Sam provides business support (evaluation, research, consultation, audience development and community engagement needs) across the company’s wide portfolio. Previously, she was the Visitor Studies Curator on the Riverside Museum Project (2007-2011). Before moving to Glasgow, she was Project Manager for Tayside Museums Learning and Access Partnership, working to support and develop museums through workforce development; learning and access; and audience development (visitor research). Her first post in museums was Curator at the British Golf Museum (2000-2005).

Kristiina Huttunen likes to tell and hear good stories. In the “Vorssammuseo 3.0” project Kristiina works as a researcher, content producer and museum educator. Kristiina’s mission is to make facts as interesting and memorable as the best fiction. She likes to encourage visitors to share feelings and memories and become involved in the museum community. She has a background as an educator, a museum worker in several museums and a freelance online journalist. Kristiina’s ideal museum is an interactive and homely place, which arouses feelings and almost forgotten memories: a museum where one can feel and learn without making a huge effort.

Sanna Kattelus is an art educator for the ‘Vorssammuseo 3.0’ project. Previously she has worked in several museums and has endeavoured to create customer-friendly environments in her work. She has worked in a number of museums located in old factory areas. Sanna sees museums as open and vivid places reflecting the everyday life of the past and present. For Sanna the key to museum education is to inspire the visitor.

Pauliina Kinanen works as a project coordinator in the Finnish Museums Association. For the last few years she has been involved in the ‘Open Museum-project’, which contributes to developing the educational skills of museum professionals in Finland and to innovate and test new kinds of participatory practices for museum visitors.
Institute for Cultural Heritage of the Region Emilia-Romagna (IT)  
www.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it (Project coordinator)

State Museums of Upper Austria (AT)  
www.landesmuseum.at

Gallo-Romeins Museum (BE)  
www.galloromeinsmuseum.be

German Museums Association (DE)  
www.museumsbund.de

Association of Danish Museums (DK)  
www.dk.museer.dk

Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports  
Department of Exhibitions & Museum Research (GR)  
www.ypoo.gr

Finnish Museums Association (FI)  
www.musea.fi

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain  
Office of State-owned Museum (ES)  
www.mcu.es/museos/

Cap Sciences (FR)  
www.cap-sciences.net

National Gallery of Ireland (IE)  
www.nationalgallery.ie

Chester Beatty Library (IE)  
www.cbl.ie

City of Turin  
Cultural Heritage Department (IT)  
www.comune.torino.it/museiscuola/

Amitié srl (IT)  
www.amitie.it

Estate Academy of Rumsiskes Museum (LT)  
www.rmda.lt

Latvian National Museum of Art (LV)  
www.immm.lv

European Museum Academy (NL)  
www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu

Sverresborg Trondelag Folk Museum (NO)  
www.sverresborg.no

National Network of Romanian Museums (RO)  
www.muzee.org

Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning (SE)  
www.nckultur.org

Glasgow Life / Glasgow Museums (UK)  
www.glasgowmuseums.com

The Manchester Museum (UK)  
www.museum.manchester.ac.uk

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (UK)  
www.niace.org.uk

University of Denver  
Museum of Anthropology (US)  
www.du.edu/anthro/museum.htm

Associate Partners are listed on  
www.lemproject.eu

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