**UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES AND VISITORS**

**HANDOUT A 1: SAMPLE DAILY LOG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday Attendance</th>
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<td>Paid:</td>
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<td>Class Participants:</td>
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<td>Members:</td>
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<th>Volunteer Sign In</th>
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<td>Totals</td>
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UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES AND VISITORS
HANDOUT B: What Does Current Audience Research Tell Us About Museum Audiences?

Sources: Reach Advisors database of 70,000+ museum-going households, US Census Bureau, Federal Reserve Board, and Centers for Disease Control

Generations vs. Life
— Looking at generational shifts, based on time of birth
— Looking at life stage, based on what is happening in a life now

Research by Generation
Mature/Silent Generation
Born: 1927-1945
Ages: 74-92
Roughly 3MM born per year

Coming of Age
Depression-era families
WWII
America emerges as superpower

Economic assumptions
Government as catalyst
Sacrifice as virtue
Leisure time and retirement as reward for hard work

Baby Boom Generation
Born: 1946-1964
Ages 55-73
Annual birth rate up 30% to roughly 4MM per year

Coming of Age
Growth of suburbia
Mass media explosion
JFK idealism
Social upheaval
Birth control

Economic assumptions
Unprecedented economic expansion
Dramatic increase in income, wealth, expectation of affluence
Highest growth followed those born 1945-1954
Generation X
Born: 1965-1979
Ages: 40-54
Annual birth rate down 15% - immigration makes up most of gap

Coming of Age
Divorce up 2x
PC / computers
AIDS
Female college grads up 70%

Economic assumptions
Increase in household income...but decreased men’s wages
Retirement $ up...but 1/3 less likely with pension
70% more debt...while discretionary spending down

Bottom line: The tradeoff generation

Generation Y
Born: 1980-1990s
Age: Up to 39
Birthrates up 10%, immigration up
Population bulge matches Baby Boom

Coming of age
Minority youth population up 2x
Mass media fragmentation
Virtually intimate
70% of high school girls heading to college

Economic assumptions
Were prematurely affluent . . .
but disproportionately affected by economic downturn
Heavier parental support

Museum Research by Life Stage
What we know about museum audiences by life stage, including:
- Customer satisfaction
- Membership motivations
- Preferences during visits

Note that the following information is based on audience (not visitor) research conducted for a wide variety of museums, not just history institutions, but the data presented is what is most relevant to history institutions.
**Older Men Over Age 60**

Generally happy audience
Most likely to be a member
Top reasons:
- Improving the museum
- Supporting community organization
Significantly better educated, more affluent
  - 50% more likely to have advanced degrees than young moms
Visit with:
- Spouse, 79%
- Alone, 20%
  - Generally, do not visit with minor children/grandchildren

History buffs
- High visitation at history museums, historic sites
- High levels of curiosity

Seeking experiences that are:
- Self-guided
- Deeper
- Individual
- Adult-oriented
- Concrete (just the facts!)
- Love to go behind the scenes
- Have very specific interests
  - Often stereotypically “male,” e.g., railroads, rigging ropes

Tend to be a very happy audience
- Emotionally connected
- Most engaged
- Seeking self-curated experiences
- Making a long-term commitment to museums
  - . . . an under-tapped opportunity?

**Older Women Over Age 60**

Visit museums they support less often but . . .
Visit wide variety of museums, but especially art and history
Heavy museum goers but why?
- Curious
- Immersion in history or art
- Their own personal interest
- Social outing with friends
- Only ¼ visit with minor grandchildren
Generally happy audience
More likely to be a member
Top reasons:
- Improving the museum
- Supporting community organization

Omnivorous Cultural Consumers
- Concerts, Theatre, Gardens, Reading, Travel
- And largely have time to cultivate these interests

Interpretation preferences
- On own, with text panels/brochures
- Guided tours at historic sites
- Costumed interpretation
- More likely to seek out audio tours/technology
- Accessibility

Dream Visitors?
- Happier, generally more positive
- More likely to be members
- Focused more on their own needs and those of their peers

Moms
Learning – top reason to visit
But learning for kids, not themselves
It’s about family time...not just the kids but only 44% visit with spouse/partner
Fun
Moms significantly more likely to visit zoos, aquariums, children’s museums, science centers than history museums, historic sites
Prefer hands-on and self-guided experiences. Only 20% enjoy guided tours, but costumed interpretation very popular
Generally, most negative audience segment
- Not engaged herself
- Significantly less likely to describe self as “curious,” visit for own interest in subject
- Less likely to be members
- More likely to join for budgetary reasons
Moms often make themselves a second-class visitor . . . putting her children first and not considering herself
- Visits for the kids

The fear: her lack of engagement/interest rubs off on kids, and they stop asking to visit museums . . . and don’t turn into adults who love museums
- Need to engage mom’s interests, intellect too
**Generation Y Women**
Focusing on women in 20s without children
Creative, aesthetic, more likely to customize stuff
Engaged in arts, crafts
Much more likely to visit museums than:
- Gen Y men
- Gen Y women who are already mothers

The reverse gender gap
- 70% of girls who graduate high school go to college
- 60% of those graduating college are women
- College graduation: 1.5x female/male ratio
- While American women who work full time earn 79% of men, in most major metros, women in 20s now earn 100-120% of men in 20s
Understand Audiences and Visitors

Handout C: Market Scanning

Where to look for information

If you read newspapers or magazines or surf the web, you are ¾ of the way there. Just think about what you read through the lens of your institution, and how it will impact it and its visitors and audiences.

General Demographic Information

- US Census Bureau website [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- Magazines (weekly news magazines, *The Atlantic*, etc.)
- Other mass media (NPR, etc.)
- YPulse (Millennial and Gen Z information - trend reports; Ypulse daily newsletter offering news, research, and trends affecting tweens, teens, and young adults) [http://www.ypulse.com/](http://www.ypulse.com/)
- Trendwatching (general trends; can be anything, from social trends to technological trends; especially see their Trendwatching Quarterly under “free publications”) [http://www.Trendwatching.com](http://www.Trendwatching.com)
- AARP (extensive research on issues affecting older adults) [http://www.aarp.org/research/](http://www.aarp.org/research/)
- Pew Research Center [https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/demography/](https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/demography/)
- Have a particular visitor or audience segment you wish to understand more? Subscribe to a magazine or two aiming at those segments. Examples:
  - Tween/teen girls? *Girl’s Life (GL)* (*median age: 15*)
  - Millennial women? *Cosmopolitan* (*median age: 31*)
  - Women in their 40s/50s? *Real Simple* (*median age: 47*)

Or course, these are generalizations.
**Museum/History/Arts Resources**

- American Association of State and Local History [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org) (also AASLH’s Facebook feed, Twitter feed, etc.)

- American Alliance of Museums [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org) (also AAM’s Facebook feed, Twitter feed, etc.; and AAM’s Center for the Future of Museums’ blog and research reports such as “Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums” and “Museums and 2034: Trends and Potential Futures.” [https://www.aam-us.org/programs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/](https://www.aam-us.org/programs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/)


- The Wallace Foundation (arts, libraries, after-school programs, education) [https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/default.aspx](https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/default.aspx)


- Humanities Indicators (by American Academy of Arts & Sciences; see especially their research under “Public Life” for information about visitation at art museums and historic sites) [https://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/indicatordoc.aspx?i=13#](https://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/indicatordoc.aspx?i=13#)

- American Library Association (has an amazing weekly newsletter) [https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al-direct/](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al-direct/)

- Nina Simon/Santa Cruz Museum of Science and History
  - Museum 2.0 (perspectives on museums and participatory culture) [http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/](http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/)
  - Of/By/For All (offers a 7-minute self-assessment to determine how well your organization serves your community) [https://www.ofbyforall.org/](https://www.ofbyforall.org/)

- Colleen Dilenschneider, “Know Your Own Bone” (shares data and findings from her employer, IMPACTS Research and Development; specific to arts and culture) [https://www.colleendilen.com/](https://www.colleendilen.com/)

- Museum Audience Insight (hard data on museum audiences; requires subscription & log-in information) [http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/)

- The Uncataloged Museum (thoughtful commentary on museums, especially history-based organizations; maintained by Linda Norris, Global Networks Program Director for International Coalition of Sites of Conscience) [http://uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com/](http://uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com/)
• ExhibiTricks (tips on exhibitry with visitor and audience perspectives thrown in from time to time) [http://blog.orselli.net/](http://blog.orselli.net/)

• ExhibitFiles (also exhibits-based; hosted by the Association of Science-Technology Centers, but inspiring and relevant for those developing history exhibits; last updated in 2014 but still has some relevant data) [http://www.exhibitfiles.org/blog/](http://www.exhibitfiles.org/blog/)

• Slover Linnett Audience Research (shares findings from their research in arts and culture fields) [https://sloverlinnett.com/insights/](https://sloverlinnett.com/insights/)

**Texas-Specific Resources**

• Travel Texas Interactive Data (data specific to visitors to your city, county, Texas State House of Representatives district, Texas State Senate district, metro area, or tourism region; focused on economic impacts) [https://www.travelstats.com/dashboard?ucode=4300](https://www.travelstats.com/dashboard?ucode=4300)