

# UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES AND VISITORS HANDOUT A 1: SAMPLE DAILY LOG

\*\*\*\*\* Museum Weekly Attendance & Volunteer Sign-In  
For the Week of \_\_\_\_\_

Monday  
Attendance

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Members \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteers \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Participants \_\_\_\_\_ Outreach \_\_\_\_\_ Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Sign In  
Name

Total Hours

Name

Total Hours

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday  
Attendance

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Members \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteers \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Participants \_\_\_\_\_ Outreach \_\_\_\_\_ Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Sign In  
Name

Total Hours

Name

Total Hours

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday  
Attendance

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Members \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteers \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Participants \_\_\_\_\_ Outreach \_\_\_\_\_ Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Sign In  
Name

Total Hours

Name

Total Hours

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thursday  
Attendance

**AASLH STEPS CURRICULUM: UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES AND VISITORS  
HANDOUT A2 REPORT**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Adult Visitors</b>	<b>Child Visitors</b>	<b>School Programs</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Website Visitors</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Sunday 5/5	3	4				
Monday 5/6				25	20	closed
Tuesday 5/7	10	5	23		2	
Wednesday 5/8	10		40		30	
Thursday 5/9	2	15			14	Girl Scout visit
Friday 5/10	15			40	10	Sr. Citizen lecture
Saturday 5/11	10	10			40	rained all day
<b>Totals</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>116</b>	

## **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 1/4 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
- The future? Longer time as single women? Postponement of children? Increasing involvement of grandparents in children's lives? Stay-at-home dads? Impact on museums that serve families?

## UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES AND VISITORS HANDOUT C: Market Scanning

### Where to look for information

If you read newspapers or magazines or surf the web, you are  $\frac{3}{4}$  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)
- Newspapers (*New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, your local weekly)
- 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/>
- American Consumers Newsletter (loaded with lots of great factoids  
[http://www.newstrategist.com/store/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&page\\_id=26](http://www.newstrategist.com/store/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&page_id=26))
- Trendwatching (general trends; can be anything, from social trends to technological trends; especially see their Trendwatching Quarterly under “free publications”)  
<http://www.Trendwatching.com>
- AARP (extensive research on issues affecting older adults)  
<http://www.aarp.org/research/>
- Pew Research Center <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/>)
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (2017; updated every few years) <https://www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/research-analysis/arts-data-profiles/arts-data-profile-18>
- The Wallace Foundation (arts, libraries, after-school programs, education) <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/default.aspx>
- ArtsJournal (daily roundup of arts news) <http://www.artsjournal.com/>
- 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#>
- American Library Association (has an *amazing* weekly newsletter) <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/>
  - Of/By/For All (offers a 7-minute self-assessment to determine how well your organization serves your community) <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/>
- Museum Audience Insight (hard data on museum audiences; requires subscription & log-in information) <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/>

- ExhibiTricks (tips on exhibitry with visitor and audience perspectives thrown in from time to time) <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/>
- Slover Linnett Audience Research (shares findings from their research in arts and culture fields) <https://sloverlinett.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>