

Goals

- Create “data-catcher” exhibits that provide exciting learning experiences about cooperation while allowing visitors to contribute to research in social science.
- Build public awareness of the methods of social science.
- Generate valid, useful data for academic research.

Exhibit-Based Public Participation in Social Science Research

The Project: Create “data-catcher” exhibits that allow museum visitors to participate in scientific research, contributing data from their interactions while engaged in compelling learning experiences.

Practitioner impact:

- Establish back-end protocols for “data-catcher” exhibits that provide exciting learning experiences while allowing visitors to contribute to academic research.
- Provide academic researchers with valid data from diverse participants.
- Determine methods for inviting visitors to provide their data and debriefing them afterwards.

Challenges and Potential Solutions

Give us your input—which strategies might work best?

Sparking visitors' interest in and engagement with the data

Should we...

- Allow them to compare their responses to others' via compelling data visualizations? (Which might encourage them to reflect on cooperation in their own lives.)
- Offer basic tools for exploring and analyzing visitor data based on demographics? (Which would engage their interest in doing basic science.)

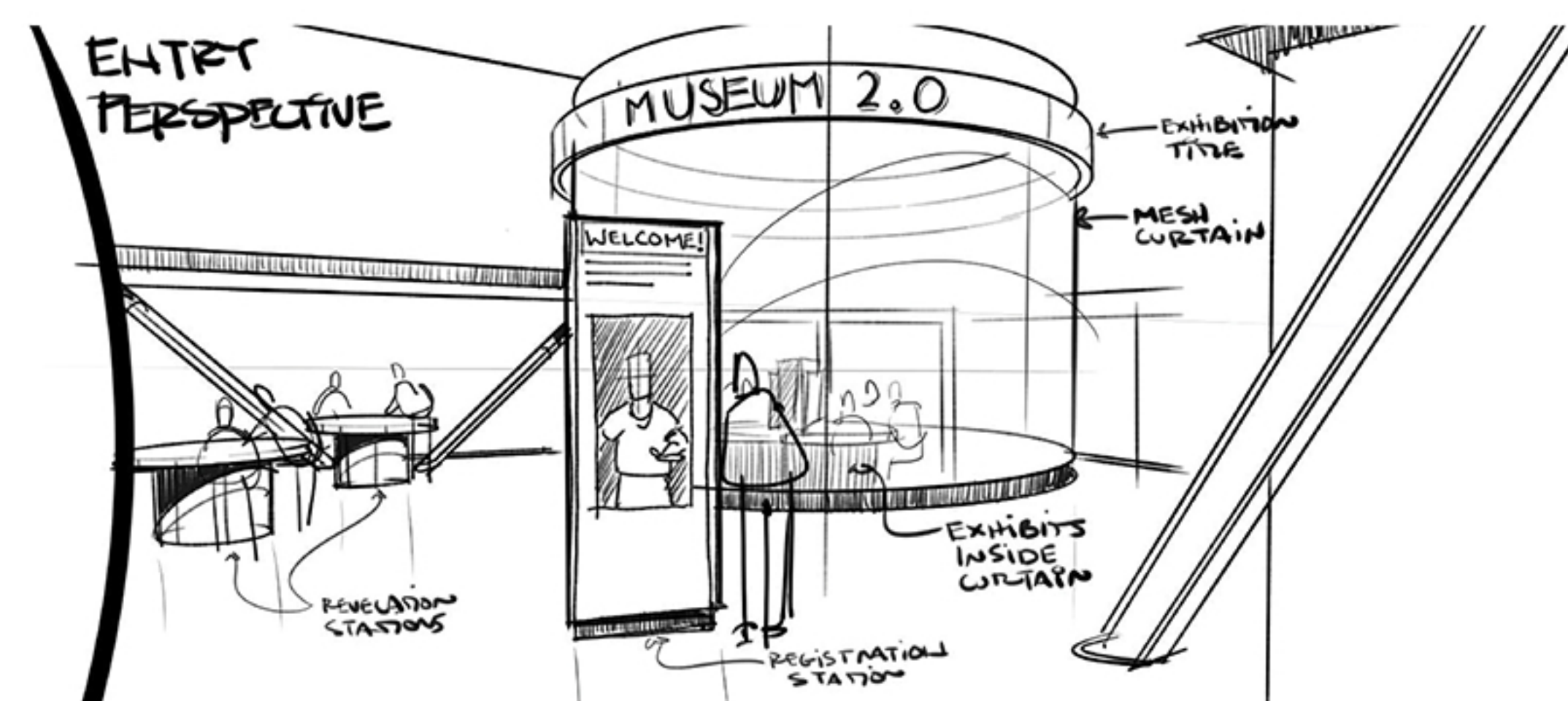
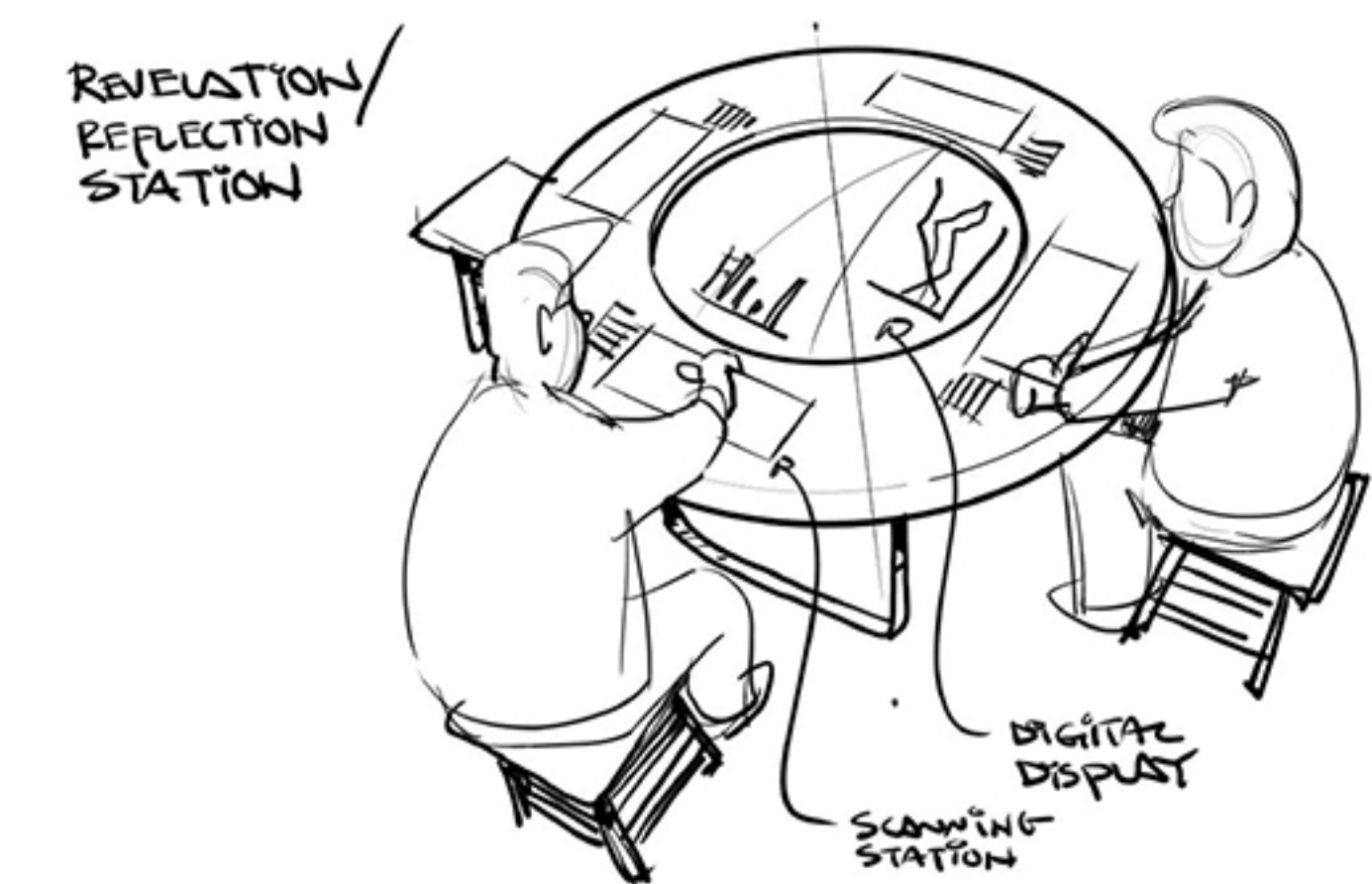
Ensuring that visitors use all three data-catcher exhibits

Should we...

- Use environmental design to enforce a sequence?
- Use exhibit methods, including environmental design, to encourage completion?

Contribution to theory:

- Develop and test a new model for Public Participation in Scientific Research.



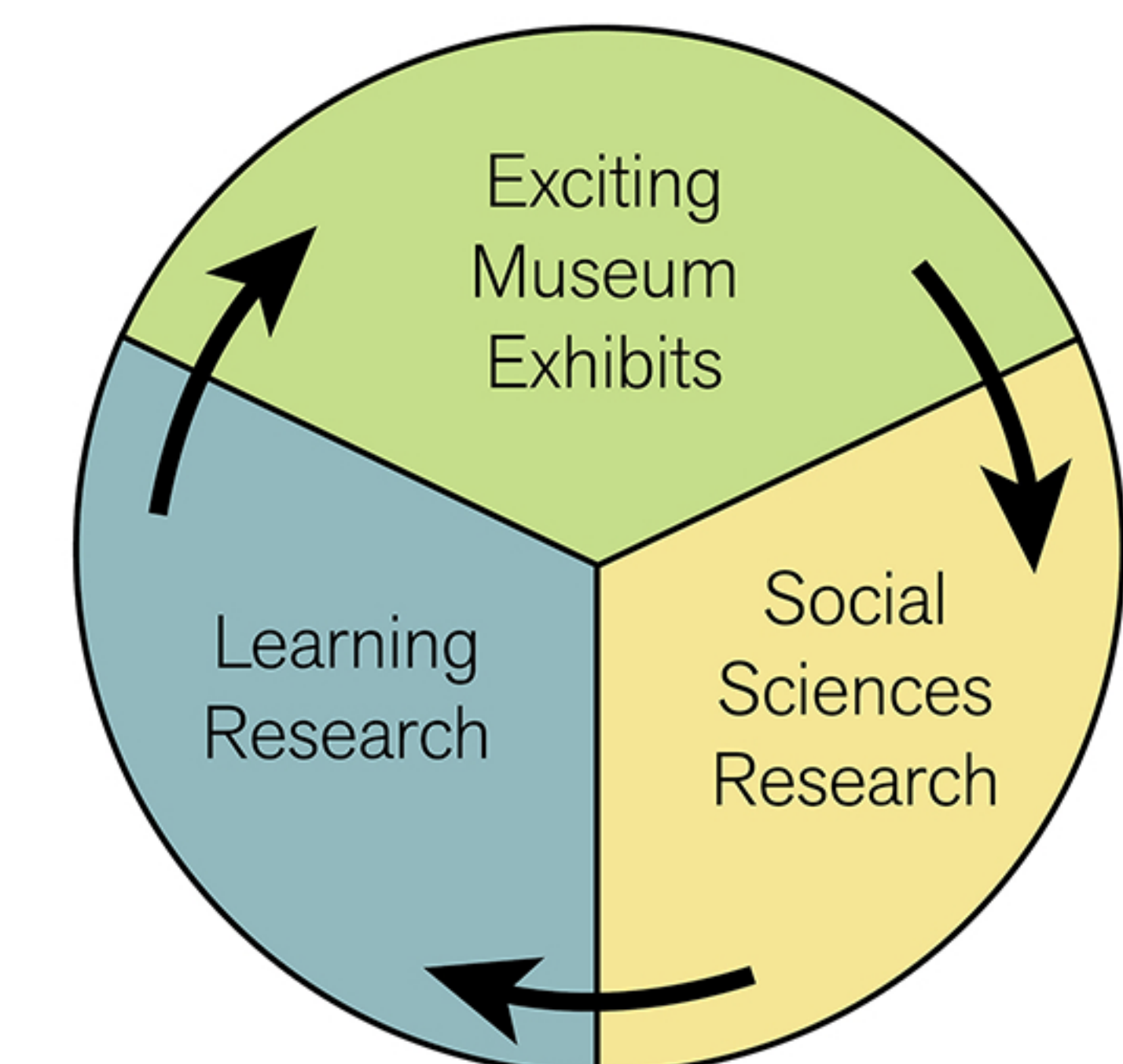
Motivating visitors to contribute their data to research

Should we...

- Promise they can compare their responses to those from other people?
- Emphasize the importance of their data to scientists and social science research? (in addition to assuring them that their data is strictly anonymous*)



Exhibit-based PRSR model



* This project has been approved by an IRB (Institutional Review Board) and by a panel of NSF reviewers.