

PREFERENCE FOR EXHIBIT CONTENT

Randall Washburne & J. Alan Wagar (1972).
Evaluating Visitor Behavior to Exhibit Content.
Curator, 15: 3, 248-254.

This study examined visitor preference for types of exhibit presentations in visitor centers. Visitors from four facilities were interviewed and asked to select the exhibit they found most interesting. Exhibit components were placed into three categories for purposes of analysis: stimulus, subjects, and strategies of communication.

1. Preferred stimulus categories. The greatest preferences were for:

- motion pictures
- changing lighting
- music
- audio sequence
- scale objects
- relief models
- paintings or drawings

2. Preferred subject categories. Preferences included:

- violence or destruction
- fossils
- land-shaping processes
- aesthetics

3. Preferred strategies for communication. Most popular responses included:

- cause-and-effect relationships
- parts making a story
- seating provided

Conclusions

Among other things, the authors concluded that:

- dynamic, multisensory stimuli are most preferred.
- visitor interest in violence is consistent with topics presented in movies and on TV.
- the strategy of providing seating during interpretive sequences may increase receptivity and extend the visitors' attention span.

[Randi Korn, Chicago Botanic Garden]

FIRST ANNUAL VISITOR STUDIES MEETING

The First Annual Visitor Studies Meeting will be held April 7-9, 1988, in Anniston, Alabama. It will be jointly sponsored by the International Laboratory for Visitor Studies, the Psychology Institute of Jacksonville State University, and the Anniston Museum of Natural History. Many of the leading professionals in visitor studies will participate in this meeting and it will include all areas of visitor studies including orientation/circulation, exhibit design and evaluation, labels/signs/graphics, audience surveys, marketing/publicity, and membership evaluation.

This meeting will be unique since: (1) participants from a variety of facilities will participate including parks, museums, zoos; and (2) the focus will be exclusively on the visitors. For information contact: Psychology Institute, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Ph. (205) 231-5640.

VISITOR BEHAVIOR

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