West Highland Museum

Visitors Survey

13th Sept 2016 – 31st Oct 2016

prepared by

Objective Software Services Ltd.

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Introduction

Background

As part of the West Highland Museum's efforts to secure funding for the future expansion of the museum, a visitor's survey was commissioned from Objective Software Services Ltd. (OSS Ltd.), a local company specialising in the development of mobile software.

It is hoped that the results from the survey will demonstrate support for the museum's expansion plans and that they will also provide further insights into the experience and expectations of the visitors.

OSS Ltd. created an Android app and provided the tablet that was used for the project. A second app was also provided to allow museum staff to communicate with the tablet to check the progress of the survey and to get an overview of its usage through the survey period.

The housing for the tablet was kindly provided by one of the museum volunteers, Mr. Chris Oram.

The tablet was fixed to the pedestal housing the visitors book. This location was chosen for the following reasons:

1) Visitors stop at this point to use the visitor's book,

2) It is usually the final stop in the visit before the shop,

3) The pedestal provided a suitable place for fixing the tablet securely

4) A convenient power outlet
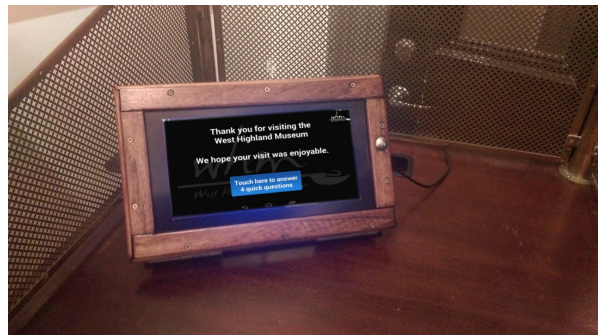
Tablet on the visitor's book pedestal

The survey consisted of four questions to assure visitors that they would not need to be spending a long time answering questions. Although there was technically a fifth question (regarding demographics), that question was optional, so visitors could skip it if desired.
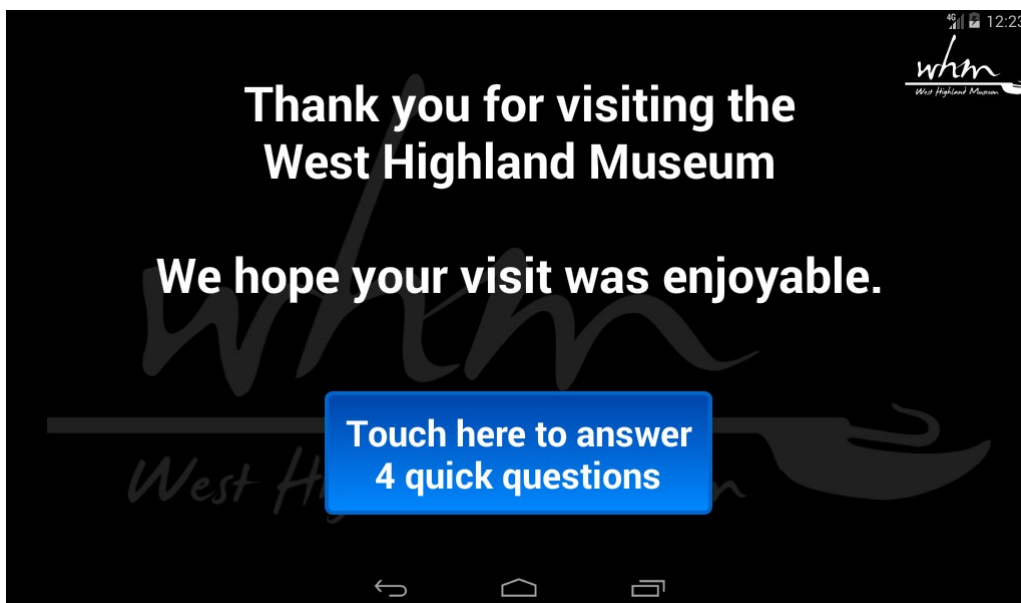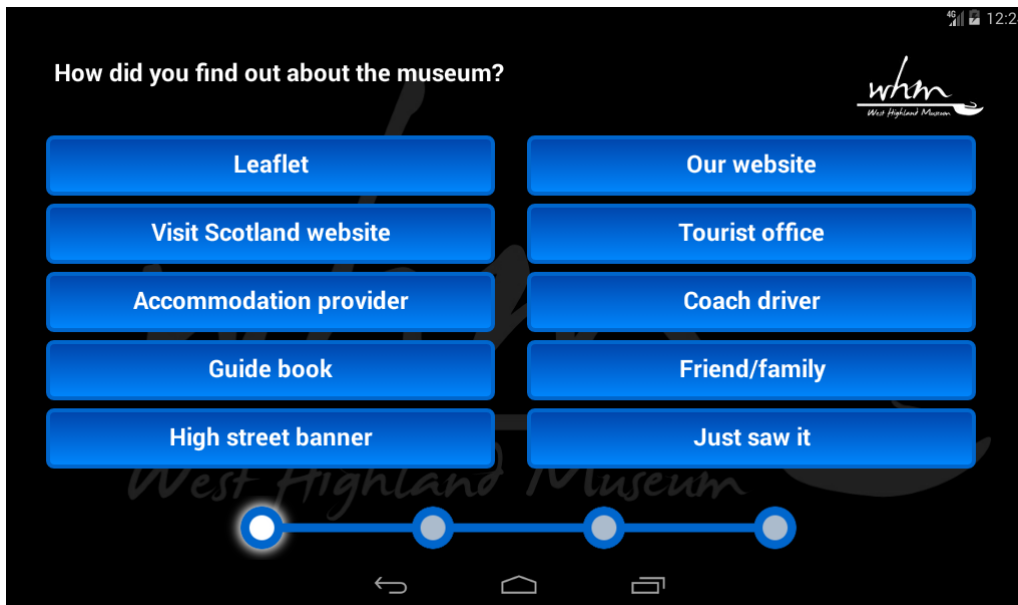

App Introduction Screenshot

The Questions

Question 1 – Finding out about the museum

This question was included to determine how well the current marketing is working for the museum.

Question 1 Screenshot

The visitor was only expected to choose one of the options, which would then progress the survey to the next question, hence no "Next»" button.

Question 2 – New and expanded exhibits

This question encompassed two related parts. Firstly to determine whether visitors wanted more from the existing exhibits (eg. the Commandos). Secondly to find out if visitors had any preferences for various possible exhibits that have been discussed internally.

Question 2 Screenshot

For the remaining screens, the visitor was allowed to choose multiple options. The exception to this is that if the "Nothing..." option was chosen, any other options were cleared. This was to prevent conflicting answers in the analysis.

Question 3 – Other facilities

This question was included to determine what additional facilities that are non-exhibit specific that the museum should provide to enhance the appeal and usage of the museum.

Question 3 Screenshot

Question 4 – Improvements and accessibility considerations

This question was included to determine what facilities visitors saw as important to improve the accessibility of the exhibits as well as the accessibility of the museum itself.

Question 4 Screenshot

Demographics (optional)

The six sub-questions in this category were included to elicit demographic information from the visitors. Each of the questions was optional and had a default value if a visitor was not willing to provide the information.

Demographics Screenshot

Following the demographics screen, a final "thank you" screen is displayed for 10 seconds before the survey resets.
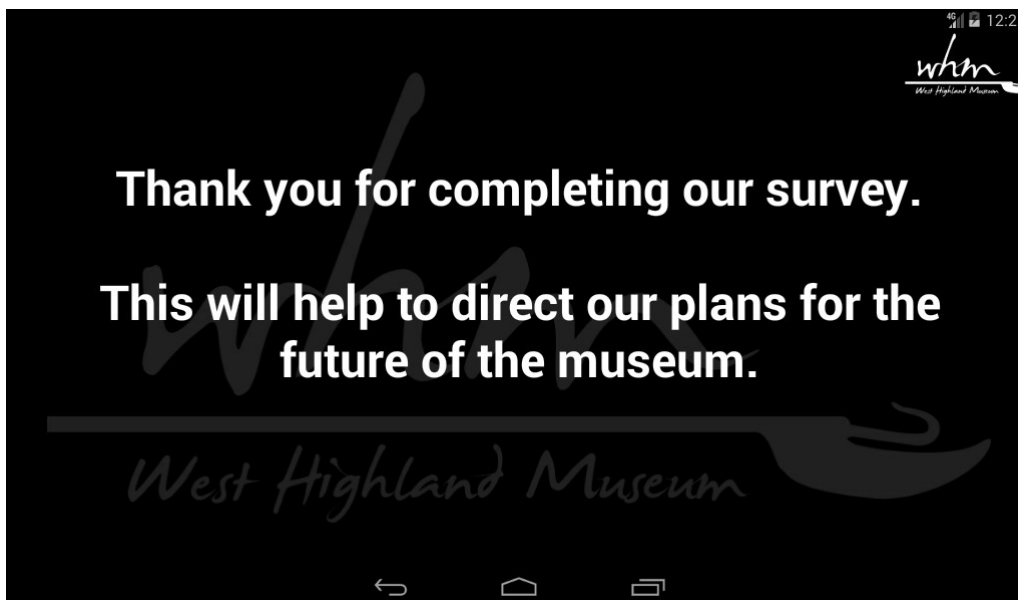
Thank you Screenshot

Analysis of survey results

The survey was available to museum visitors from 13th September 2016 to 31st October 2016.

During this period the number of completed surveys was:

321

The following sections contain the individual analysis of each question. The raw results of each question are presented with a graphical representation. This is then followed by a descriptive analysis of those results and suggested meaning behind them.

Where appropriate, further information and comment is provided to help avoid misinterpretation.

Question 1 – Finding out about the museum

Q1 - Raw results

Option	Text	Count	%
1	Leaflet	19	6%
2	Our website	12	4%
3	Visit Scotland website	21	7%
4	Tourist office	14	4%
5	Accommodation provider	14	4%
6	Coach driver	7	2%
7	Guide book	29	9%
8	Friend/family	33	10%
9	High street banner	39	12%
10	Just saw it	133	41%

How did you find out about the museum?
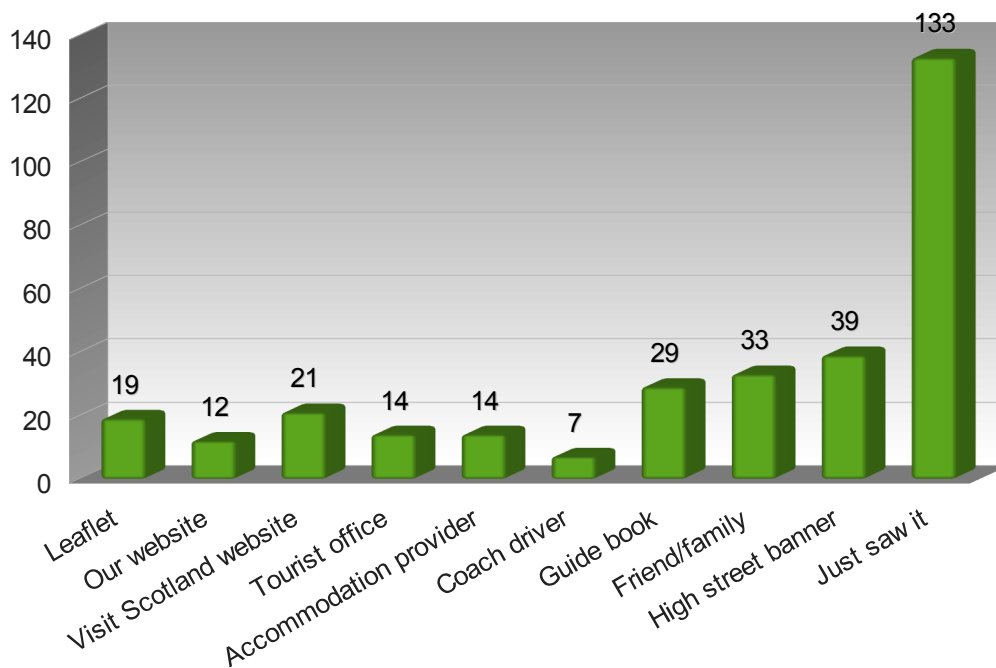
Q1 - Analysis

It is clear from the answers to this question that most people come across the museum by chance, rather than as a result of existing marketing efforts.

It seems reasonable to combine the results of "High Street Banner" and "Just saw it" to effectively mean the same thing. This may also include visitors that saw the advertisement in the West End car park. These combined figures represent 53% of visitors.

The online presence does not seem to be a primary factor in attracting visitors, but may still have a significant influence. eg. If a friend or family member has suggested the museum as a destination, the visitor may well have researched the museum online via the WHM website or the Visit Scotland website. However, their answer to this question would still be that they found out about the museum from a friend.

The analytics for the WHM and Visit Scotland websites are not available for correlation within this report.

Since most visitors appear to be visiting the museum following a local prompt (leaflet, tourist office, banner, just saw it), it would make sense to target further marketing efforts towards providing advertising in the local area and at locations for which the museum has relevant exhibits.

A few suggestions:

- Local area
  - The A82 underpass on the way into town
  - At the car parks near the Nevis Centre
- Relevant locations
  - The Old Fort
  - The Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge
  - Inverlochy castle
  - Glencoe

Further discussion about the linking of the museum's exhibits to locations outwith Fort William itself could be discussed.

Question 2 – New or expanded exhibits

Q2 - Raw results[1]

Option	Text	Count	%
11	WW2/Commandos/SOE	47	15%
12	Land management	24	7%
13	West Highland Way	58	18%
14	Model T Ford and History	34	11%
15	Highland life	129	40%
16	Clearances and Emigration	75	23%
17	Climbing, Mountaineering, Skiing	43	13%
18	Local sports (Shinty, Golf, Water sports)	29	9%
19	Industrial heritage	44	14%
20	Nothing, it's fine as it is	76	24%

What new or expanded exhibitions would you like to see in the museum?

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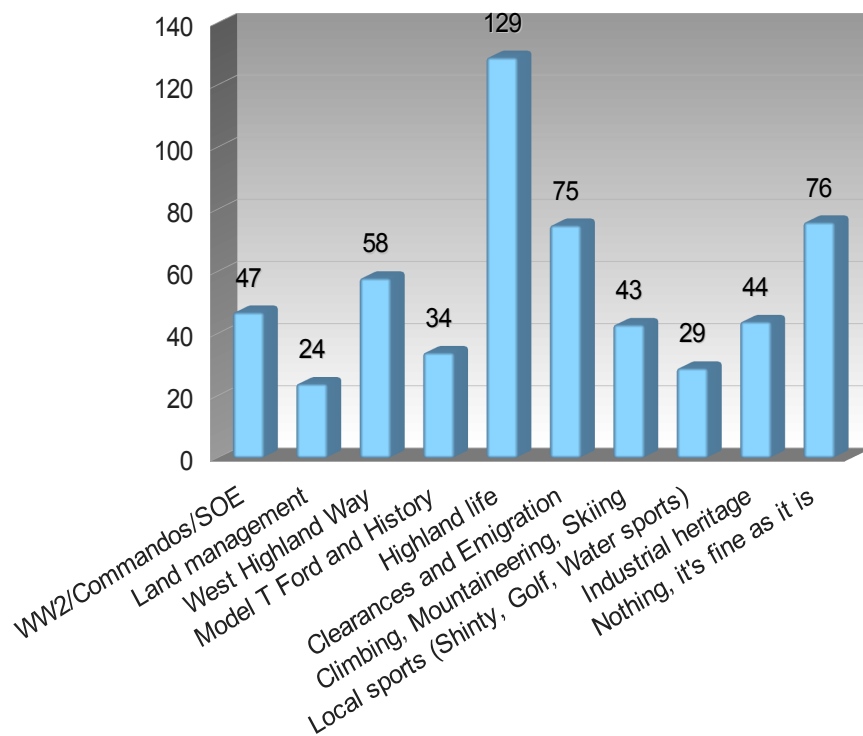
1   Because this question (and questions 3 and 4) allowed multiple choices, the percentage figure in the table is based on the individual option. ie. 47 people would like to have seen the WW2 exhibit expanded. This is 15% of the total number of survey respondents (321).

Q2 - Analysis

There is a clear demand from a large proportion of visitors for more information about Highland Life.

The second most popular selection was to change nothing. This is quite a difficult statistic to interpret. One interpretation could be that they were happy with the museum and that if nothing changed, they would still be happy. An alternative could be that they were explicitly wanting no change to the current situation, ie. that they think any of the suggested changes would not be a good thing.

However, this second alternative seems much less likely. Also, if no option was selected, this is the default option.

Then second most popular suggestion was for an expansion of the Clearances and Emigration exhibit, currently limited to a single table of documents in room 7. The museum currently doesn't have an exhibit or information about the West Highland Way, which was the next most popular option.

After these top three requests, there were group of options with a similar level of popularity. "WW2/Commandos", "Climbing, Mountaineering, Skiing" and "Industrial Heritage". Each of these already has some representation in the museum, so these would all be requests for expansion to the current exhibits.

Although the other options were not as popular, it is interesting to note that none of the options were completely unsupported.

Question 3 – Other facilities

Q3 - Raw results

Option	Text	Count	%
21	Art gallery	27	8%
22	Cafe	99	31%
23	More toilets	29	9%
24	Bigger shop	40	12%
25	Access to museum library	25	8%
26	A "Local's living memories" room	69	21%
27	Meeting/conference room	5	2%
28	Nothing, it's fine as it is	127	40%

What other facilities would you like us to provide?
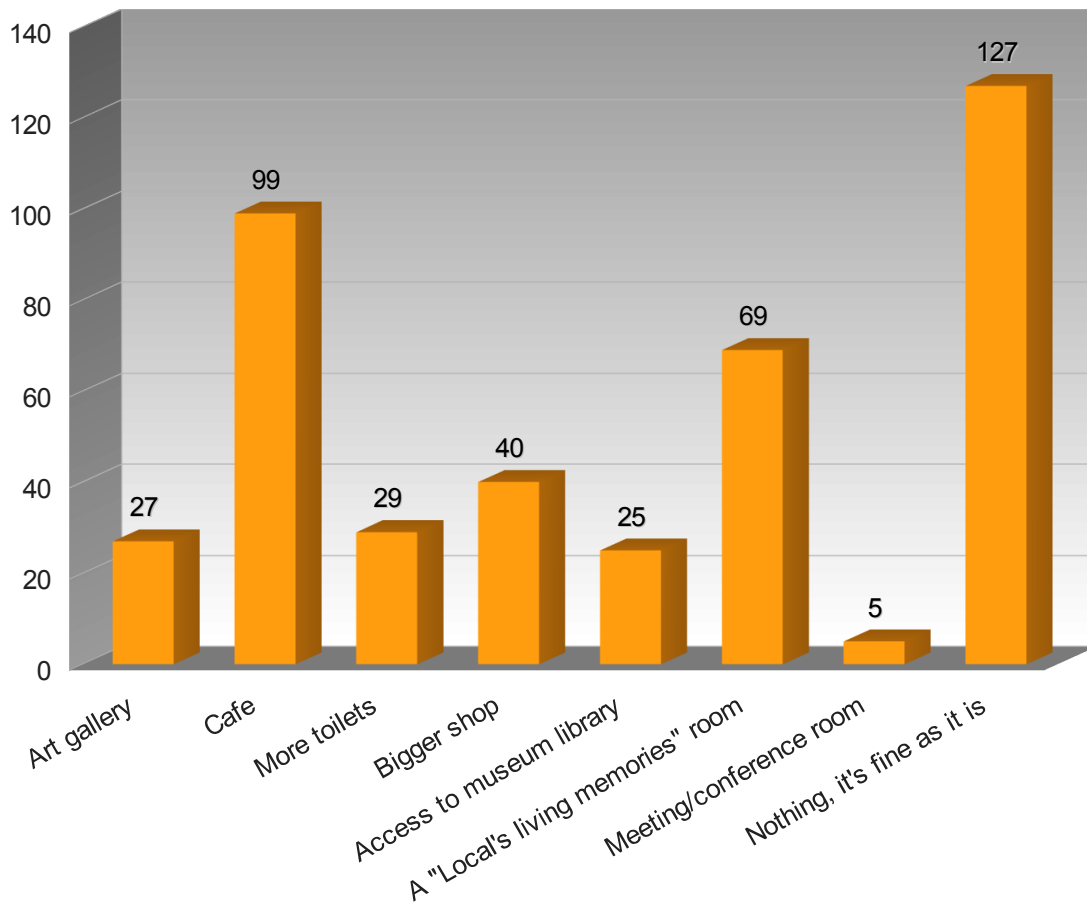
Q3 - Analysis

The statistics show that 40% of visitors are happy with the existing facilities at the museum. However, between them, the cafe and "locals living memories" room polled over 50%. Other than the conference room, which visitors would not see as having any value, there is a good range of options that have been selected. This follows a similar pattern to that described in the comment from Q2, where the "Nothing..." option is unlikely to mean that visitors do not want changes.

Fort William already has a number of cafes, so the high number of visitors that are suggesting that the museum should also have a cafe may only be doing so because they have finished their tour of the museum and would now like a drink and somewhere to sit for a while. There is no guarantee that even if the museum provided a cafe, that visitors would stay to use that in preference to one of the others.

As a cafe is an entirely different venture to a museum, the suggestion that providing and running such a facility could be outsourced to a 3rd party would seem to be worth considering.

The "Locals living memories" room has never been completely defined and so the respondents may have been choosing this option for different reasons. The following definition is proposed in order to frame further discussion of this:

A room containing exhibits and information gathered about the local area and local people from the early to mid- 20th century. It may also be possible to have guest speakers, or videos of locals who can relate their personal stories to visitors.

The option of "more toilets" was included for interest, to see whether visitors had issues with the current facilities. When the museum is expanded and upgraded, I would expect that there will be some building codes that will determine how many toilets would actually be required for the given space and predicted visitor count.

Question 4 – Improvements and accessibility considerations

Q4 - Raw results

Option	Text	Count	%
29	Elevator/Lift	61	19%
30	More space in corridors/rooms	41	13%
31	Use of technology in exhibits (eg. interactive displays)	106	33%
32	Improved labelling for disabled visitors	23	7%
33	Child friendly exhibitions	73	23%
34	Nothing, it's fine as it is	121	38%

If we extend the museum, what would be the best way for us to improve access for everyone?
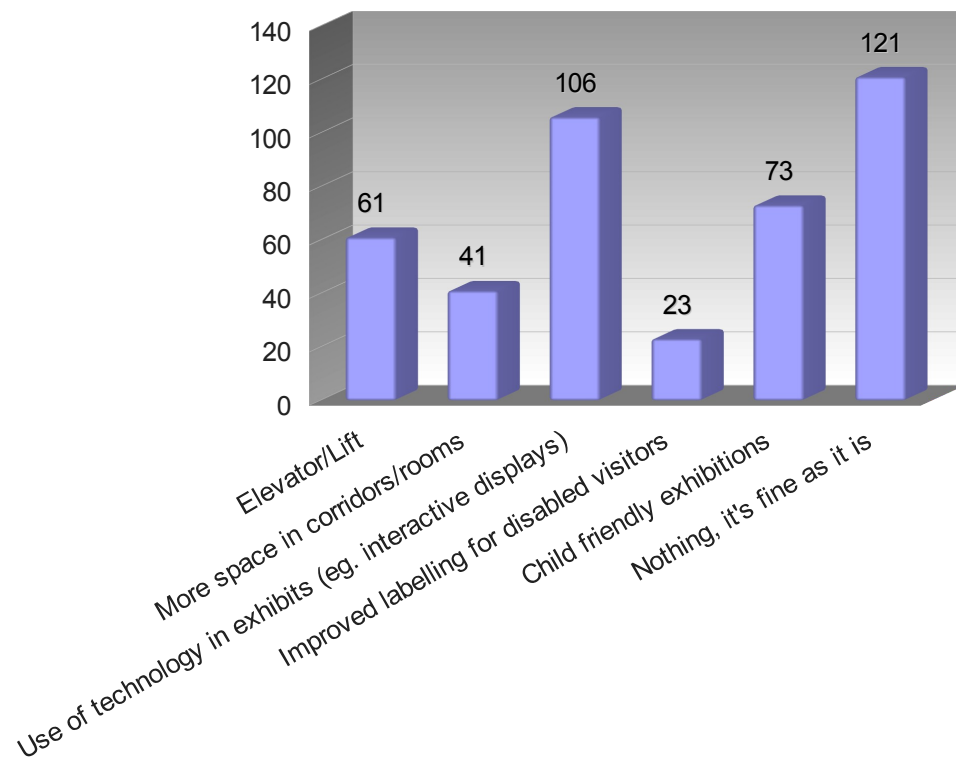
Q4 - Analysis

Although "Use of technology" is clearly a popular choice, it should be noted that the respondents that completed this survey must, by definition, be reasonably comfortable with the use of touch-screen technology. This may indicate a slight bias towards the desire for further technology in support of exhibits. However, it is also noticeable that 33% of all respondents selected this option, so it must still be seen as quite significant.

Almost a quarter of the visitors felt that the museum was lacking in child friendly exhibits. Perhaps more interactive exhibits (not behind glass) with items that can be handled could be introduced.
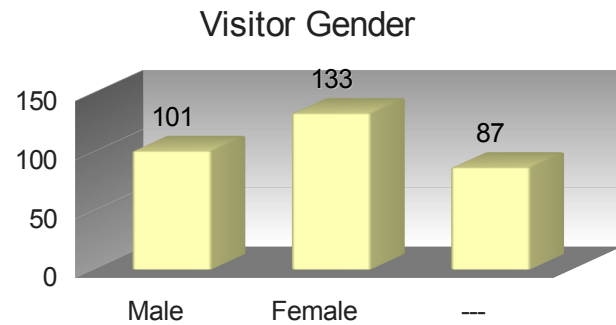
Addition of an elevator/lift should fall under the remit of the building codes and compliance with accessibility legislation.

Demographics

Raw results

Gender

| Gender	
Male	101
Female	133
---	87

Visitor Gender

The data indicates a slightly larger
proportion of female visitors to male. Although there is no way to be certain about the 45 people
that refused to provide a gender, it is likely to be a similar split.

It may be worth noting that most visitors to the museum are couples. The figures may reflect that
for some reason, a female in a couple is more likely to be completing the survey. There is no
indication that there is any significant bias.

Age range

| Age	
Under 16	18
16 - 24	29
25 - 34	45
35 - 44	21
45 - 54	37
55 - 64	48
65+	35
---	88
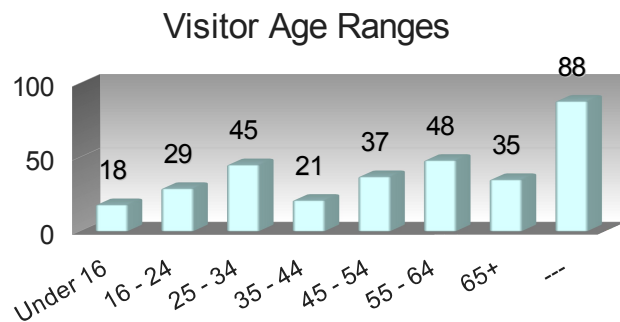
Visitor Age Ranges

Using average values for each of the ranges, the data shows an approximate average visitor age of
43.6 years.

There were a substantial number of visitors not providing an age and a relatively low number of
visitors aged 35-44, but even when assuming a larger number (eg. 40) of 35-44 year-olds, this has
no significant impact on the average.

Size of party

Size of Party	
1	37
2	127
3	27
4	25
5 - 9	8
10+	6
---	91

Size of visitor party
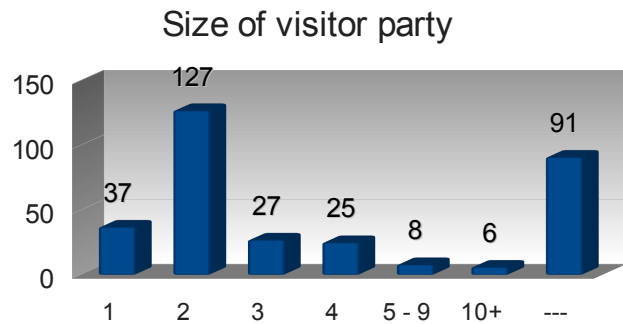
Most people visiting the museum are coming in pairs. The low numbers of visitors from groups of 10+ would seem to indicate that visitors from coach parties actually see themselves as pairs or sub-groups within the larger group.

Visit again

Visit Again?	
Yes	196
No	3
Possibly	122
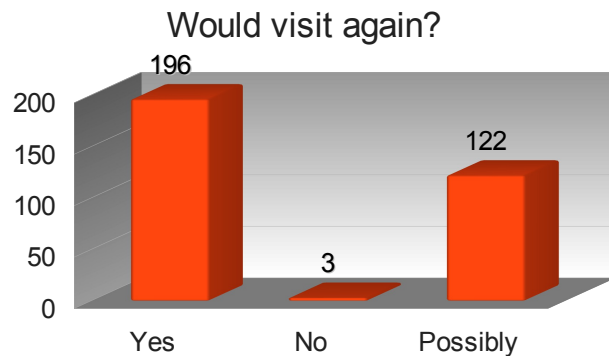
Would visit again?

Of the three people that say they would not visit again, they also said that they *would* recommend the museum. This would suggest that their reason for not visiting again is more likely because they "can't" visit rather than they "won't" visit.

Recommend

Recommend?	
Yes	222
No	1
Possibly	98
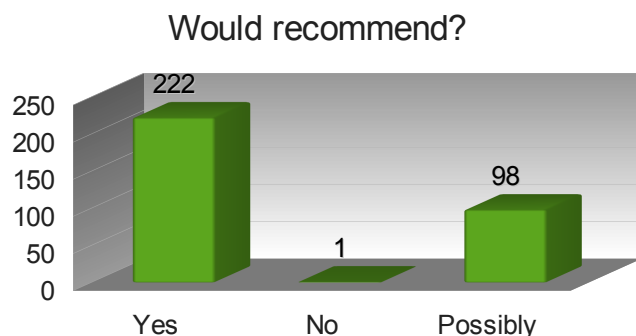
Would recommend?

The one person that said that they would not recommend the museum only appears to have provided some cursory answers to other questions. They are, apparently, a 65+ year old woman from the UK who came on her own and would visit again. This result can probably be discarded.

Visitor countries

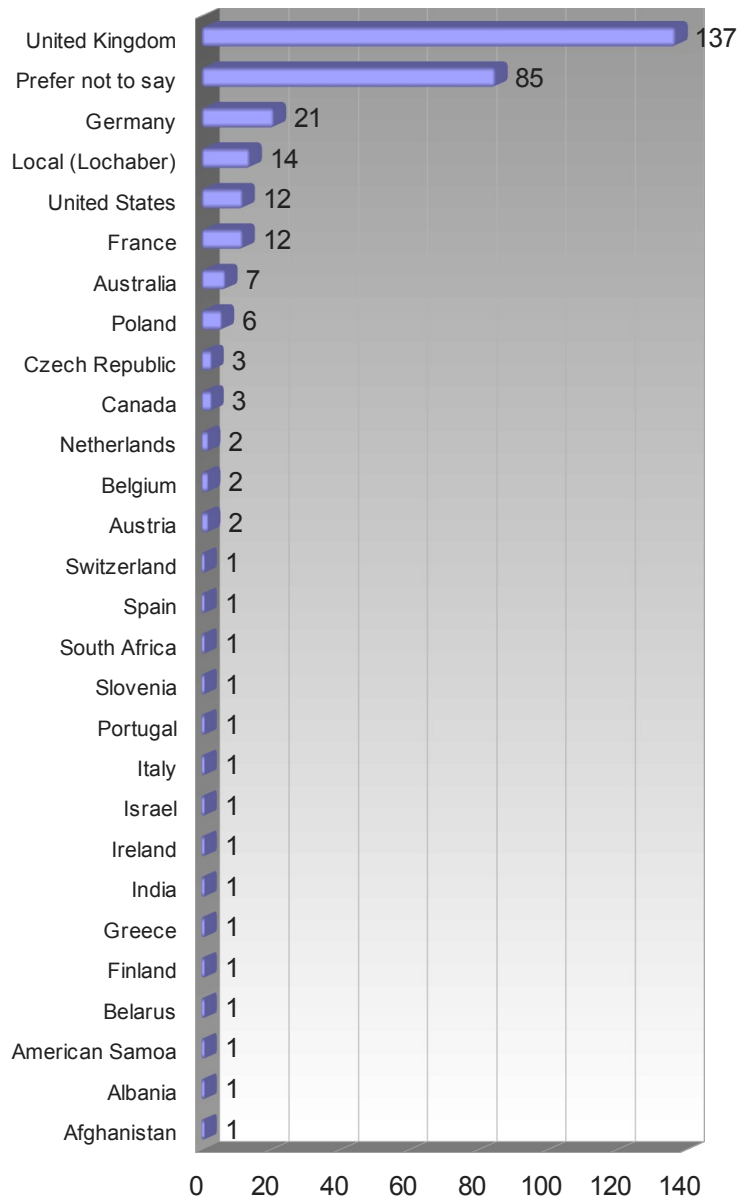| Visitor Countries	
Afghanistan	1
Albania	1
American Samoa	1
Belarus	1
Finland	1
Greece	1
India	1
Ireland	1
Israel	1
Italy	1
Portugal	1
Slovenia	1
South Africa	1
Spain	1
Switzerland	1
Austria	2
Belgium	2
Netherlands	2
Canada	3
Czech Republic	3
Poland	6
Australia	7
France	12
United States	12
Local (Lochaber)	14
Germany	21
Prefer not to say	85
United Kingdom	137

Visitor origin by country

Country	Value
United Kingdom	137
Prefer not to say	85
Germany	21
Local (Lochaber)	14
United States	12
France	12
Australia	7
Poland	6
Czech Republic	3
Canada	3
Netherlands	2
Belgium	2
Austria	2
Switzerland	1
Spain	1
South Africa	1
Slovenia	1
Portugal	1
Italy	1
Israel	1
Ireland	1
India	1
Greece	1
Finland	1
Belarus	1
American Samoa	1
Albania	1
Afghanistan	1

As seen with some previous results, some of the entries on the survey were unlikely to be authentic. With regard to the countries listed, it is suspected that "American Samoa" is more likely to have been selected by a resident of the USA who chose it because it contained the word America. The Afghanistan entry is also likely to be unreliable as this is the first entry in the countries list and is therefore easy to select if the survey is not being filled in seriously. The other survey answers from this visitor would also indicate this.