# DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION TECHNICAL SERIES No. 9

# EVALUATING DISPLAYS AND ON-SITE PANELS: A GUIDE FOR DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION STAFF

by

Richard Meylan

© February 1996, Department of Conservation

# Cataloguing-in-Publication data

```
Meylan, Richard.
Evaluating displays and on-site panels: a guide for Department of Conservation staff / by Richard Meylan. Wellington, N.Z.: Dept. of Conservation, 1996.
1 v.; 30 cm. (Department of Conservation technical series, 1172-6873; no. 9.)
ISBN 0478017669
1. Signs and signboards--Design and construction. I. Title.
II. Series: Department of Conservation technical series; no. 9.
659.1342 20
zbn96-023482
```

# **CONTENTS**

ABSTRACT 1
<ul> <li>1.INTRODUCTION 1</li> <li>1.1 Why evaluate? 1</li> <li>1.2 When to evaluate? 1</li> <li>1.3 What information does evaluation research give? 2</li> <li>1.4 What does the evaluation research look at? 2</li> <li>1.5 How can evaluation research be used? 2</li> </ul>
2. RESEARCH METHOD FOR EVALUATING THE WHOLE DISPLAY AREA
Overview 4 2.1 Tracking and timing 4
2.1.1 Introduction 4
2.1.2 What information does this method give? 4
2.1.3 What is needed? 4
2.1.4 How is it carried out? 5
2.1.5 How is the information organised? 5 2.2 Behavioural mapping 5
2.2.1 What information does this method give? 5
2.2.2 What is needed? 6
2.2.3 How is it carried out? 6
2.2.4 How is the data organised? 6
<ul><li>2.3 One-on-one interview questionnaire 6</li><li>2.3.1 What sort of information does this method give? 6</li></ul>
2.3.2 What is needed? 6
2.3.3 How is it carried out? 7
2.3.4 How is the data you have collected organised? 7
2.4 Staff interview 8
2.4.1 What sort of information does this method give 8 2.4.2 What is needed? 8
2.4.2 What is needed? 6  2.4.3 How is it carried out? 9
2.4.4 How is the information organised? 9
2.5 Group interviews 9
2.6 Visitor book 9
3. RESEARCH METHOD FOR EVALUATING INDIVIDUAL DISPLAYS AND ON-SITE PANELS DURING THE DESIGN 10 Overview 10
3.1 Introduction 11
3.2 Observation 11
3.2.1 What sort of information does this method give? 11 3.2.2 What is needed? 11
3.2.3 How is it carried out? 11
3.2.4 How is the data organised? 11
3.3 Interview questionnaire 11
3.3.1 What sort of information does this method give? 11
3.3.2 What is needed? 11
3.3.3 How is it carried out? 12
3.3.4 How is the data organised? 12 3.3.5 Using the information for modifying displays 13
3.3.5 Using the information for modifying displays 13

RESEARCH METHOD FOR EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL DISPLAYS ON-SITE PANELS 14						
Overview 14						
4.1 Introduction 14						
<b>4.2 Observation</b> 14						
4.2.1 What information does this method give? 14						
4.2.2 What is needed? 14						
4.2.3 How is it carried out? 14						
4.2.4 How is the information organised? 15						
4.3 Questionnaire 15						
4.3.1 What sort of information does this method give? 15						
4.3.2 What is needed? 15						
4.3.3 How is it carried out? 15						
4.3.4 How is the data organised? 16						

**APPENDIX 1** 17

**APPENDIX 2** 18

# EVALUATING DISPLAYS AND ON-SITE PANELS: A GUIDE FOR DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION STAFF

by Richard Meylan

# **ABSTRACT**

This guide is designed to give Department of Conservation staff a way of consulting with those who use displays - the visitors. It presumes that understanding the visitor, their needs and expectations, and how well you meet them is central to the effectiveness of displays. Therefore, the visitor as the client has a critical role in planning, delivering and ongoing improvements of displays. The guide looks at how to tap into the clients as "consultants", and how to use this information to contribute to the maintenance of effective displays.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This guide explains how to carry out evaluation research of existing displays or display panels or mock-ups of proposed displays.

# 1.1 Why evaluate?

- To assist in creating displays which mean more to visitors.
- To create displays which more fully reflect the creator's visions.
- To ensure the Department of Conservation's messages are being communicated.
- To justify, and account for expenditure.

#### 1.2 When to evaluate?

|deally at all stages of the design process.

	Display Area	Individual Display or On-Site Panel
Looking for ideas	Front-end Evaluation	Front-end Evaluation
Will what has been planned work?	Formative Evaluation	Formative Evaluation
What changes can be made to improve an existing display?	Summative Evaluation	Summative Evaluation
How effective is the display?	Summative Evaluation	Summative Evaluation

#### Front-End Evaluation

Front-end evaluation involves consultation with interested parties, visitors, and potential visitors in an attempt to determine what information and presentation styles they would like from a display or display area.

This consultation process with visitors and potential visitors can be time consuming and expensive and needs specialist skills and is not addressed in this guide.

#### Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation involves using plans, models and mock-ups of displays to determine whether the information they are intended to communicate is received by the visitors.

To carry out formative evaluation for a whole display area is time consuming. However, it is easily and inexpensively done for individual displays or on-site panels and methods are detailed in this guide.

#### Summative Evaluation

This proceedure does not require specialist skills and can be carried out by most people. The guide explains how to do this for individual displays or a display area.

# 1.3 What information does evaluation research give?

- It gives an understanding of the way displays are received by visitors.
- It provides feed-back to the creators of displays on how the users respond to them.

#### 1.4 What does the evaluation research look at?

Either officially (The Design Brief), but more usually unofficially, the planners have a picture in their mind of:

- how visitors are to use the display (the behavioural response),
- how visitors will experience the display, and how they will be affected by it (the affective/experiential response), and
- what people will learn from the display (the educational response).

Therefore, the evaluation research looks at:

- The behavioural response of the visitors to the display area and/or display:
  - what do they do, e.g., reading, touching, discussing?
  - how long do they spend there?
- The experience of visiting the display and/or display area and its affect on the visitor:
  - how did the display make them feel, e.g., in awe, wonderment, horror?
  - the experience what they enjoyed and did not enjoy about the visit to the display.
- The educational response to the display area and/or display:
  - what did they learn?
  - did they receive the intended message?

#### 1.5 How can evaluation research be used?

Evaluation of displays or mock-ups enables the creators to evaluate whether the display is going someway to achieving their intentions. However, this is not the only measure

of whether the display is effective. Responses that the creators did not consider, and even unintended responses, will often be judged effective.

What the research methods do is enable the researcher to say that this is what the visitor thinks is effective about this display and this is what they think is not effective. From this information the display can be evaluated and remedial action can be taken if it is judged as necessary.

Such action will, of course, depend on realities such as budget priorities. However, this type of information will be useful in determining the amount of expenditure which is appropriate.

# 2. RESEARCH METHOD FOR EVALUATING THE WHOLE DISPLAY AREA

#### **OVERVIEW**

#### WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THIS METHOD?

- How visitors use the display area.
- · What do they like and dislike.
- · Suggestions for how they would improve it.
- How different groups of visitors use the display area, e.g., overseas tourists, children.

# **RESEARCH TECHNIQUES**

- 1. Tracking and timing.
- 2. Behavioural mapping.
- 3 Questionnaire.
- 4. Staff interview.
- 5. Group interview (optional).
- 6. Visitor book analysis (optional).

# MINIMUM NUMBER OF VISITORS NEEDED FOR USEFUL DATA 50

**TIME** 40 hours (approximately)

# 2.1 Tracking and timing

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

Tracking and timing is a method adapted from architectural research where the movement of the visitor around the centre is monitored. This is done without the visitor realising that it is going on.

# 2.1.2 What information does this method give?

# Behavioural

- The time visitors spend in the visitor centre.
- How visitors use the various parts of the centre.
- Where points of congestion are.
- The mean time spent in the display area.
- The relative popularity of the different displays in attracting visitors.
- The average time visitors spend at displays.
- How visitors move through the displays.
- A check on the behavioural mapping, i.e., are the same patterns evident.

# 2.1.3 What is needed?

- Copies of the plan of the visitor centre to A4 size, or bigger if needed. If a plan is not available it will have to be sketched roughly to scale. On the plan label all the interpretation displays and the other significant parts of the visitor centre e.g., reception desk, retail area, promotional stand etc.
- · Pen.
- · Clipboard to write on.
- A watch which displays seconds.
- · Patience.

#### 2.1.4 How is it carried out?

- Randomly select visitors as they enter, e.g., every third visitor (the number does not matter as long as the system is consistent. It will depend on the number of visitors coming through and how long a break you want!)
- Whether the visitor is a child, teenager or adult is noted.
- A code number is given (e.g., the first child might be coded C1). N.B., This is important to maintain the anonymity of the visitor.
- · Start time is noted on the plan.
- Every time the visitor stops, put a cross on the plan at the appropriate point and note the time in minutes and seconds.
- If the visitor is not looking at the display, e.g., telling kids off or talking to staff, note this.
- · Note any interesting behaviour, e.g., a display causes a lot of discussion.
- Exit time is noted on the plan.
- Get permission from the visitor to use the data (see 2.3.4).

# 2.1.5 How is the information organised?

- Draw up a matrix with the displays and the parts of the centre you have identified on the map listed down the side. Across the top put the visitor's code.
- By taking the time the visitor stopped at, for example Display A and the time they arrived at Display B, the time spent at Display A can be calculated. (This will include the moving between displays but this is usually a short time and not worth worrying about.)
- In each cell of the matrix note the time the visitor spent at each place e.g.,

	C1	C2	С3
Display A	30	90	10
Desk	120	10	40

- Note The total time the visitor spent in the centre (if studied).
  - The total time visitors spent specifically in the display area at the bottom of the column.
- · Calculate the mean time visitors spent in the display area.
- Calculate the number of visitors that stopped at each interpretation display.
- Rank order the interpretation displays according to the number of visitors who stopped.
- Calculate the mean times spent at each interpretation display.
- Note the pattern of movement around the display area, especially if it was intended that visitors move in a particular pattern.
- If information is needed on specific visitor groups, e.g., overseas tourists, children, these can be separately organised.

# 2.2 Behavioural mapping

# 2.2.1 What information does this method give?

- Behavioural
  - The relative popularity of the various parts of the visitor centre.
  - Areas of congestion.
  - Check on the tracking and timing information, i.e., are the same patterns evident.

# 2.2.2 What is needed?

- Copies of the plan of the visitor centre (A4 size or bigger if needed). If a plan is not available it will have to be sketched roughly to scale. On the map label all the interpretation displays and the other significant parts of the visitor centre e.g., reception desk, retail area, promotional stand etc.
- · Pen.
- · A watch which displays minutes.

#### 2.2.3 How is it carried out?

- This method takes about 30 seconds every 30 minutes. It can therefore be done over long or short periods of time.
- Every 30 minutes the position of the visitors in the centre is noted on the map.

# 2.2.4 How is the data organised?

• The total number of visitors at each part of the visitors' centre is totalled up.

# 2.3 One-on-one interview questionnaire

# 2.3.1 What sort of information does this method give?

This information can form the basis of the research report:

- Behavioural
  - -Why people visit. (Q1)
  - Do visitors come particularly to see the displays? (Q1)
- Educational
  - What presentation style do visitors find effective. (Q2)
  - What topics visitors are interested in. (Q2)
  - What information the visitors are least interested in. (Q3)
  - What presentation style are visitors least interested in. (Q3)
  - Are any aspects of the displays confusing. (Q4)
  - What information do visitors want. (Q5)

# Affective/Experiental

- What presentation style visitors enjoy. (Q2, Q5)
- What topics visitors enjoy. (Q2, Q5)
- What presentation style visitors enjoy the least. (Q2, Q5)
- What topics visitors enjoy the least. (Q2, Q5)
- What affective experiences do visitors want. (Q5)

#### 2.3.2 What is needed?

See Appendix One for a copy of the questionnaire.

- The questions:
  - 1. What is the main reason you came into the centre today? Did the centre meet your needs?
  - 2. What did you like the best about:
    - the way the displays are presented,
    - the topics the displays are about?
  - 3. What did you like least about the displays? Why?
  - 4. Do you think visitors would find any of the displays confusing? Why/why not?
  - 5. If you had the time, the money and the job of developer of these displays, how would you improve them?
- Pen.
- · Clipboard.

# 2.3.3 How is it carried out?

- The visitor who has been tracked and timed and has spent at least two minutes in the display area is approached at the end of their visit to the display area.
  - Briefly explain that you are carrying out some research on what visitors think about the displays.
  - Explain that you have been tracking and timing them.
  - Ask them if they would mind answering a few questions about their experience.
- Ask the question clearly and with interest you are trying to create an atmosphere where people feel free to give their ideas. It is a good idea to practice this first!
- Listen to the answer but do not get into discussion over it. Bland comments such as "that is interesting" or "thank you for that" are acceptable and do keep a flow of conversation going. If the visitor wants information from you, ask if you can do that at the end of the interview so as not to bias the visitor's ideas. Note that this happens quite often.
- Record their answers as close as possible to what they say although sometimes you will need to summarise. Visitors are quite happy to wait while you write their answers. Remember these are open-ended questions and people do come up with their own ideas. Record all these. This is so those who are creating displays have the visitors' responses to help them.

# 2.3.4 How is the data you have collected organised?

This involves three stages:

- 1. Collating.
- 2. Organising.
- 3. Presenting.

# Collating the data

The key ideas in each visitor's comments need to be identified\_ .

- Read through the response from the visitor.
- Determine the main points of the answer and note these.
- The results are collated questions by question.

# Organising the data

Question 1 - What is the main reason you came into the centre today? Organise the results using the following categories as headings:

- For information.
- To visit the displays.
- Dropped in/passing by.
- Other.

Did the centre need your needs?

Organise the results using the following categories as headings:

- Yes.
- No.
- Partially.
- Not appropriate to ask the question (this final category is included because the question may not be appropriate to be asked for people who are doing things  $\parallel$  ke "just passing".

Question 2 - What do you like best about the ways the displays are presented and the display topics?

Organise the results using the following categories as headings:

- Display topics.
- Specific presentation styles.
- Overall presentation.
- Other

By looking at the answers under each of the above topics, sub-topics may be able to be determined. For example, if photographs were mentioned, the category they would be recorded under is Specific Presentation Styles. Then, if photographs were mentioned by six other visitors, that number is recorded next to photographs.

Question 3 - What do you like the least? Categories:

- Nothing/like it all.
- No answer/don't know.
- Specific display design feature.
- Other.

Group the answers where they cover similar areas.

Question 4 - Do you think visitors would find any of the displays confusing? Categories:

- No.
- List all other answers. These can be grouped where they cover similar concerns (see example at end of this document).

Question 5 - If you had the time, the money, and the job of developer of these displays, how would you improve them?

As this question is asking for visitor's ideas, all answers are of interest and so need to be listed. The answers can be organised under the broad headings of "information" and "presentation". Under these two topics the suggestions can be grouped where they cover similar concerns. These groupings will need to be worked out for each individual centre.

N.B., if information is needed on specific visitor groups -e.g., overseas tourists, children then these can be presented separately.

#### **Presenting The Data**

How you present the data will depend on who is going to read it! If you are going to write a report use headings as suggested for data organisation and summarise findings.

# 2.4 Staff interview

# 2.4.1 What sort of information does this method give?

Staff who work in visitor centres usually have an excellent understanding of what "works" and what does not "work". They also may have suggestions for how problems can be overcome based on their day to day experience, and contact with visitors.

# 2.4.2 What is needed?

Short period of staff time (15 minutes?)

# 2.4.3 How is it carried out?

This interview is best carried out as a touring interview. Those staff who work with the display area (e.g., desk staff, those involved with maintenance, volunteers) are asked to walk through the displays with the interviewer and to comment on what they think is successful about the displays, and what is not successful, and how they think they could be improved. This is a very informal interview situation and will need to be adapted to suit the circumstances. However, staff have an excellent understanding of what goes on and are a valuable source of information on the operation of the display area.

# 2.4.4 How is the information organised?

It can be simply listed under the headings of successful, not successful, and suggestions. When presenting the information the staff suggestions can be included in the write-up.

# 2.5 Group interviews

Sometimes the opportunity arises to carry out a group interview, e.g., a family, school group, bus tour, holiday programme. Such interviews can take place while "touring" through displays. Often the information from these interviews is better than one-on-one as visitors develop their ideas in discussions with others, and feel less intimidated than the on-on-one situation but let the discussion be controlled by the visitors. The "note taker" can order the answers under the right questions rather than order the discussion.

This type of interview does, however, need two researchers - one who asks the questions and listens to answers, and the other who notes the answers.

Use the questions, and analysis as for one-on-one interviews.

#### 2.6 Visitor book

Don't forget the visitor book as this may have some comments about the displays.

# 3.0 RESEARCH METHOD FOR EVALUATING INDIVIDUAL DISPLAYS AND ON-SITE PANELS DURING THE DESIGN PROCESS

#### **OVERVIEW**

#### WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THIS METHOD?

- What messages the visitors are receiving from the display.
- If visitors understand the method of presentation.

#### **RESEARCH TECHNIQUES**

- Observation.
- · Questionnaire.

#### NUMBER OF VISITORS NEEDED FOR USEFUL DATA

This method requires a relatively small sample of visitors, e.g., 20 to 30. However, depending on the intentions of the display, it may be important to divide the sample up into different groups, for example children, teenagers and adults, and overseas visitors, local visitors

**TIME** One to three days depending on resources/time available for research.

# IF THE DISPLAY IS IN THE DESIGN STAGE, WHAT IS NEEDED TO EVALUATE IT?

A "rough and ready" mock-up of the display or on-site panel. The mock-up ideally needs to be roughly the same size and proportion as the intended display. Use your imagination for ways of representing parts of the display. However, remember this is to be "rough and ready" - just enough so that the visitor realises what is being shown.

Possible ways of doing this are:

- For panels use large sheets of papers.
- For three dimensional objects use cardboard boxes, paper mache.
- For photographs use outline of the frames and a rough outline sketch with the word photograph written in the frame.
- Text use handwriting to approximate size.
- Diagrams use sketches emphasising the main ideas.
- Buttons use red dots with explanations of what they do.
- Labels use handwriting to approximate size.
- Objects use similar shaped object or cardboard representation with a label to explain what it is.

Set up the mock-up display or on-site panel in either:

- the place where it will be displayed, or
- in a place where visitors are, for example another visitor centre.

# But if the display is only a mock-up how do you get visitors to look at it?

- Explain to visitors that a new display/on-site panel is being trialled and that their opinion on it would be appreciated.
- Invite representatives of those groups the display is intended for, e.g., school students, families, local residents, conservationists, general public etc. Explain the reasons for inviting them to attend (as above).
- Offer a "bribe", e.g., transport to the display, cup of tea and a biscuit afterwards, tour or talk, small gift.

# 3.1 Introduction

The research techniques explained here are a way of finding out how visitors will react to a display or on-site panel before you spend money on producing it.

These evaluation techniques are based on those used by organisations such as the British Museum of Natural History.

#### 3.2 Observation

# 3.2.1 What sort of information does this method give?

#### Behavioural

- How visitors use the display.
- How long visitors spend at the display.

# 3.2.2 What is needed?

• The questionnaire (see Appendix 2).

#### 3.2.3 How is it carried out?

The visitor is observed and the following are noted:

- 1. Age and gender of the visitor.
- 2. Specific behaviour when at the mock-up, e.g., whether visitors read information.

# 3.2.4 How is the data organised?

Given that the purpose of this research methodology is to give feedback to the designers, and that the sample size is not big, it would be hoped that the designer would read all the visitors'responses. To make this easier, similar answers could be grouped together for presentation.

# 3.3 Interview questionnaire

# 3.3.1 What sort of information does this method give?

# Educational

- What is the overall message visitors get from the display? (Q1)
- Is the information interesting? (Q2, Q3)
- Is the presentational style interesting and effective? (Q1, Q3)
- Is there anything confusing about the information? (Q4)
- Is there anything confusing about the presentation? (Q4)
- Are the specific messages communicated? (Q5)

#### Affective/Experiental

- Would the visitor enjoy the display? (Q2)
- Is the presentational style enjoyable? (Q3)

# 3.3.2 What is needed?

- The questions:
  - Question One What do you think the designer was trying to show with this display?
  - Question Two Do you think this display is designed for people like you? Why/why not?
  - Question Three What did you like about this display?
  - Question Four Is there anything you found confusing?

- Questions Five Specific question(s) relating to instructions and messages. These can be "test' type questions, e.g., What caused this landform?
- Pen.
- · Clipboard.

#### 3.3.3 How is it carried out?

The visitor who has been observed is approached as he/she leaves the display.

- Explain that you have been observing them.
- Ask if they would mind answering some questions about their experience.
- Ask the question clearly and with interest you are trying to create an atmosphere where people feel free to give their ideas. It is a good idea to practice this first!
- Listen to the answer but do not get into discussion over it. Bland comments such as "that is interesting" or "thank you for that" are acceptable and do keep a flow of conversation going. If the visitor wants information from you, ask if you can do that at the end of the interview so as not to bias the visitor's ideas. Note that this happens guite often.
- Record their answers as close as possible to what they say, but sometimes you will need to summarise. Visitors are quite happy to wait while you write their answers. Remember, these are open-ended questions and people do come up with their own ideas. Record all these.

# 3.3.4 How is the data organised?

Remember that you are collating, organising and presenting the information so that those who are creating displays have the visitors' information to help them.

This involves three stages:

- 1. Collating,
- 2. Organising,
- 3. Presenting.

#### Collating

To do this, the key ideas in each visitor's comments need to be identified.

- The results are collated question by question.
- Read through the response from the visitor.
- Determine the main points in the answer and note these.

# Organising the data

Organise the information question by question:

#### Question one

Group the answers that are similar. If the objectives of the display are known, group those which have got the right idea and those that are confused.

#### Question two

This question is designed to determine whether the display is too complicated or simple, and whether the visitors find the presentation is appropriate.

Group into: yes,

no

Then group similar answers, noting the age of the visitor.

#### Question three

This question is designed to elicit responses on the presentation techniques and overall affects. As there will be a number of answers, list these and group when they are similar.

#### Question four

This question is designed to show up aspects of the display that are confusing. List answers and group. Note that with this question, some answers will be because the visitors found the prototype confusing. These will need to be removed from the sample.

Question five onwards need to be grouped as for question one.

# Presenting the data

Given that the purpose of this research methodology is to give feedback to the designers and that the sample size is not big, it would be hoped that the designers would read all the visitors' responses. To make this easier, similar answers could be grouped together for presentation.

# 3.3.5 Using the information for modifying displays

REMEMBER

This research methodology is effective in finding out if the messages the visitors are receiving from the display are those that the designer intended, i.e., the educational responses. It is also useful for measuring the affective responses to the information that is presented, i.e., how the information makes visitors feel.

It is not good at determining the behavioural responses or the experiential responses as visitors treat the mock-ups differently from the real thing - often they spend more time at the mock-ups than they do at the real thing!

THEREFORE If the research shows there are aspects of the display that are not understood then the designers may:

- choose to "repair" these,
- look at other ways of presenting the information,
- accept the lack of understanding.

# 4.0 RESEARCH METHOD FOR EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL DISPLAYS OR ON-SITE PANELS

#### **OVERVIEW**

#### WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THIS METHOD?

- How visitors use the display.
- What they think is effective and not so effective.
- What messages do they receive from the display.

# **RESEARCH TECHNIQUES**

- 1. Observation.
- 2. Questionnaire.

#### NUMBER OF VISITORS NEEDED FOR USEFUL DATA

This method requires a relative small sample of visitors, e.g., 20 to 30. However, depending on the intentions of the display, it may be important to divide the sample up into different groups, for example children, teenagers and adults, and overseas visitors, local visitors.

TIME One to Two Days

#### 4.1 Introduction

The research techniques explained here are a way of finding out how visitors react to a display or on-site panel.

These methods are based on evaluation techniques that are developed by organisations such as the British Museum of Natural History and use both detailed observation and a questionnaire for one-on-one interviews.

#### 4.2 Observation

# 4.2.1 What information does this method give?

- The time spent at the display.
- How visitors use the display.
- How visitors respond to the display.

# 4.2.2 What is needed?

• Pen, clipboard.

# 4.2.3 How is it carried out?

- The time visitor arrives at the display is noted.
- The visitor is observed while interacting with the display and this is noted (this will differ from display to display but may include reading, looking at photographs, using buttons on interactives, and interactions with other visitors).
- When the visitor has finished at the display:
  - Note the finish time.
  - Approach them.
  - Introduce yourself.
  - Explain that you are carrying out research to try to find out what visitors think about this display.

- Explain you have been observing them and ask if they would mind answering some questions.

# 4.2.4 How is the information organised?

- The times spent at the display are listed and the mean is calculated.
- The observations are listed and grouped into similar categories, e.g., reading, pushing buttons, looking at photographs.

# 4.3 Questionnaire

# 4.3.1 What sort of information does this method give?

#### Educational

- What presentation style do visitors find effective? (Q1)
- What information from the display are visitors interested in? (Q1)
- What information from the display are visitors least interested in? (Q2)
- What presentation style visitors find least effective? (Q2)
- Are any aspects of the display confusing? (Q3)
- What messages are visitors getting from the display? (Q4)
- What messages are visitors getting from parts of the display? (Q5)
- What information do visitors want? (Q6)

# Affective/Experiential

- What presentation style do visitors enjoy? (Q1, Q6)
- What information visitors enjoyed knowing about? (Q1, Q6)
- What affective experiences do the visitors want from the display? (Q6)

#### 4.3.2 What is needed?

Questionnaire (see Appendix 2)

- Question One What did you like about this display? Why?
- Question Two What did you least? Why?
- Question Three Did you find anything confusing?
- Question Four What do you think the designer was trying to show with this, display?
- Question Five (question specific to display)
- Question Six If you where the designer of this display, how would you improve it?

#### 4.3.3 How is it carried out?

- The visitor who has been observed (and has stayed for longer than one minute) is approached as they leave the display.
  - Briefly explain that you are carrying out some research on what visitors think of the display.
  - Explain you have been observing them.
  - Ask if they would mind answering some questions about their experience.
- Ask the question clearly and with interest you are trying to create an atmosphere where people feel free to give their ideas. It is a good idea to practice this first!
- Listen to the answer but do not get into discussion over it. Bland comments such as "that is interesting" or "thank you for that" are acceptable and do keep a flow of conversation going. If the visitor wants information from you, ask if you can do that at the end of the interview so as not to bias the visitor's ideas. Note that this happens quite often.

• Record their answers as close as possible to what they say but sometimes you do need to summarise. Visitors are quite happy to wait while you write their answers. Remember these are open-ended questions and people do come up with their own ideas. Record all these.

# 4.3.4 How is the data organised?

Remember you are collating, organising and presenting the information so those who are creating displays have the visitors' information to help them.

This involves three stages:

- 1. Collating,
- 2. Organising,
- 3. Presenting.

# Collating

To do this, the key ideas in each visitor's comments need to be identified.

- The results are collated question by question.
- Read through the response from the visitor.
- Determine the main points in the answer and note these.

# Organising the data

Organise the information question by question i.e.:

- Question 1 List and group when similar
- Question 2 List and group when similar
- Question 3 Separate yes and no answers, and group yes answers when similar
- Question 4 List and group when similar
- Question 5 List answers and categorise into correct and incorrect
- Question 6 List and group when similar

# Presenting the data

This research will usually be carried out to determine what, if any, changes need to be made to a display. This, along with the small sample size, means that all those who are involved in making the changes should read the visitors' responses. To make this easier similar answers can be grouped together.

# **APPENDIX 1**

# INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISPLAY AREA

# **INTRODUCTION**

# **EXPLAIN TRACKING AND TIMING**

# GET PERMISSION TO USE THE DATA

OLI I	ENMISSION TO GOL THE DATA
1	What is the main reason you came into the centre today?
	Did the centre meet your needs?
2	What did you like best about - the way the displays are presented
	- the way the displays are presented
	- the display topics?
3	What did you like least about the displays? Why?
4	Do you think visitors would find any of the displays confusing?
5	If you had the time, the money and the job of developer of these displays, how would you improve them?
6	Where are you from?
7	Male/Female Child/Teenager/Adult Code Number

# **APPENDIX 2**

START TIME:

# **OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW FOR SPECIFIC DISPLAY**

DISPLAY:

CHILE MALE	H TIME: D/TEENAGER/ADULT /FEMALE MPANIED BY	CODE:	
OBSE	RVED BEHAVIOUR		
INTRO	DDUCTION		
1	What did you like abo	out this display? Why?	
2	What did you like leas	st? Why?	
3	Do you think other vis	sitors would find any part of this display confu	sing?
4	What did you think th	ne developer was trying to show with this displ	lay?
5	(Question specific to	display.)	
6	If you were the devel	loper of this display, how would you improve it	t?