

Leisure Studies

Publisher: Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group

Issue: Volume 14, Number 2 / April 1995

Pages: 132 - 149

URL: [Linking Options](#)

DOI: 10.1080/02614369500390111

### **Visitors' use of interpretive media at heritage sites**

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#### **Abstract:**

Although heritage interpretation is a central component of the modern heritage industry there has been relatively little concern with how visitors to heritage sites make use of interpretive media. This paper reports a study of visitors' use of three interpretive media — exhibitions, outdoor panels, and stereo-audio tours — commonly employed at one type of heritage site, namely ancient monuments. Interpretation is an important component of the visit for many people, although visitors differ in the interest and attention they display to the interpretive media. This is greatest for audio media and less for visual media. This was attributed both to qualities of the interpretive media themselves (e.g. subject matter, readability), and also to characteristics of visitors, particularly their motive for visiting. This supports the notion that the 'effectiveness' of interpretation is the result of an interaction between visitor and interpretive medium, rather than depending solely on the interpretive medium.

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Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 44, No. 3, 318-326 (2006)

DOI: 10.1177/0047287505279004

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## **Heritage Site Perceptions and Motivations to Visit**

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The present study has two main objectives: (1) to further explore the motivations of potential visitors to a heritage site, and (2) to explore whether the relationships among the tourists' perceptions of the site relative to their own heritage are related to their motivations for the visit. The sample is composed of potential visitors to Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. The results reveal the existence of motives often ignored in previous studies, including emotional involvement and bequeathal of the site's narrative. The findings also indicate a distinct relationship between tourists' perceptions of a site relative to their own heritage and the motivations for visiting the site. The study contributes to the understanding of tourist behaviors relative to heritage settings along with implications for the marketing of heritage settings.

**Key Words:** Anne Frank House • potential visitors • heritage • motivation • perception

<http://jtr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/44/3/318>

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/students/profile/223>

### **Communication, interpretation and fruition in museums, galleries and heritage sites**

This research project is currently being developed by Rhiannon Mason, Andrew Newman, Iain Wheeldon and Chris Whitehead, and a substantial funding bid is in preparation. The project involves an attempt to draw together factors which, although profoundly interrelated, are not usually considered as such. 'Fruition' is used to indicate the diverse, personal and often unpredictable strategies and theories employed by individuals to derive meaning and gain from engagement with tangible and intangible heritage (from museum objects to buildings, works of art and transient performances) within the context of museums, galleries and heritage sites. Communication and interpretation relate to the project of mapping discourses (e.g. about the past, about art as a concept etc.) onto visitor experience through the use of environmental and textual registers (the former is embodied in the physical fabric and sensuality of given displays, and the latter in interpretive texts such as labels, panels and audioguides). This research project is concerned with identifying and characterising both visitor fruition and curatorial/institutional communication and interpretation as well as the potential for mismatch between them; it will also investigate the potentials for different 'modes' of visitor engagement between visits to museums, galleries and heritage sites. The project is interdisciplinary, involving the adoption of perspectives and approaches from museum, gallery and heritage studies and from sociology and psychology.

[http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sacs/research/icchs/research\\_projects.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sacs/research/icchs/research_projects.htm)

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## **Children - Learning and Playing**

Children playing and learning resources. Articles on kids learning and playing. Learning is defined in psychology as a permanent change in behavior, motivated by experience. Evolution suggests that mind and consciousness are not confined to humans, and it seems obvious, if one observes the play of young animals, that it is part of their learning experience. Human play is a voluntary, fun-filled activity, a primitive kind of communication in which the players engage in behaviors that mimic reality. Children, who have few other ways of communicating, use play as their major technique for self-expression and social behavior. Find out more about learning and playing, and how they shape our lives, with the links below.

<http://www.mywonderfulworld.org/partners.html>

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• **Information Systems and Computing** - The use of multimedia for heritage interpretation, and as a tool for anthropological research into leisure, tourism and travel; novel multimedia architectures to support ironic, 'post-tourist' interpretations of heritage sites - New internet technologies and novel navigation techniques, moving beyond menu-picking in rich media interfaces - Department of Communication Systems, [Faculty of Science & Technology](#)