

Which families are you attracting?

The advantages to museums and art galleries of gathering accurate baseline data on the social composition of family audiences

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How do we define 'family'?

- From work done over the past 5 years we have baseline data on the composition of family group visitors from which to proceed
- Art galleries and museums have differing definitions of their family visitor groups
- Our use of the term 'family' does not make assumptions based on unsubstantiated mythology



Working definition of 'family'

- ***Any multi-generational social group of not more than 5-6 people, with children, that comes as a unit to the art gallery***

These are modern families

- Mothers with their children
- Women with other women relatives and friends and children
- Fathers with their children
- Couples with their children
- Grandparents
- Carers, au pairs, nannies
- Multi-generational groups



Families visiting art galleries and museums

Mothers with their children	45%
Grandparents and grandchildren	22%
Fathers with their children	10%
Couples with their children	9%
Multi-generational groups/others	4%

example of family visitor groups (grandparents)

Grandparents with grandchildren					
Family group code number	Respondent and age	2 nd adult and age	1st child and age	2 nd child and age	Ethnicity
20	grandmother 41-50		granddaughter 6-10		White UK
9	grandmother 51-65	grandfather 51-65	granddaughter 11-16	daughter 31-40	White UK
47	grandmother 51-65	grandfather > 65	granddaughter 11-16	girl 11-16	White UK
15	grandmother 51-65		granddaughter 6-10		White UK
16	grandmother 51-65		grandson 6-10	girl 11-16	White UK
4	grandmother 51-65		grandson < 5	boy < 5	White UK
29	grandmother 51-65		granddaughter 6-10		White UK
28	grandmother > 65	grandfather > 65	grandson 11-16		White UK
44	grandmother > 65	grandfather > 65	grandson 11-16		White UK
24	grandfather 51-65		grandson < 5		White UK

Fig 4.1a Grandparent groups



Why is it important to know?

- There is more visitor studies research in museums than art galleries
- Evidence about family visitors from museums does not easily translate into strategies for attracting families to art galleries
- Research into family group visiting is mainly focused on LEARNING OUTCOMES
- Leisure, social and cultural aspects are under-researched



3 national and regional galleries in the UK:

V&A

Manchester

Sheffield

All investing in their family audiences



A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair styled in a bun with a red flower. She has a red mark on her forehead and is wearing a red top with a blue sash. The background is a light, textured surface.

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Events and
Activities
for Families

V&A

- Victoria and Albert Museum, London
- National



- Sheffield Millennium Galleries
- Regional

- Manchester Art Gallery
- Local

Triangulating data using 3 research methods

- **Characteristics and demographics of family visitors**
- Survey
- Records and documents

- **Behaviour of family visitors**
- Survey
- In-depth interview
- Observation

- **Motivation and experience of family visitors**
- Survey
- In-depth interview

Multiple sources of evidence
for more reliable results

The diagram illustrates the process of triangulating data. It features three columns of research methods. The first column lists 'Characteristics and demographics of family visitors', 'Survey', and 'Records and documents'. The second column lists 'Behaviour of family visitors', 'Survey', 'In-depth interview', and 'Observation'. The third column lists 'Motivation and experience of family visitors', 'Survey', and 'In-depth interview'. Blue arrows point from 'Records and documents' in the first column, 'In-depth interview' in the second column, and 'In-depth interview' in the third column towards the central text 'Multiple sources of evidence for more reliable results'.

Methods: Survey Questionnaire

- One National Gallery
- One Regional Gallery
- One Local Gallery
- 400 + questionnaires results in accurate quantitative demographic data:
 - Defining
 - Measuring
 - Describing

Family Group visitors to the three galleries



Methods: observation

- CCTV video observation of family visits in our earlier research shows what we should be asking and what we should be looking for
- In-house CCTV surveillance can be used in a positive way
- Families are tricky groups to identify. The video footage helps us to spot family groups for the current study, and is used to train research assistants for the current project



Methods: In-depth interview

- Research findings are not always put into practice; the analysis of in-depth interviews in this study contributes directly to developing and implementing family provision
- In-depth interviews provide robust, triangulated qualitative data for the 3 case studies



Findings and recommendations

Mothers and children



- Art gallery +
- Shopping or
- Other activities in town
- Appreciate easy access on public transport
- Most typical family type

Mothers with adult friends and relatives and children



- Combining art gallery with other activities
- Shopping
- Lunch, but not in the gallery
- Time constrained
- Wide range of ages of children

Fathers with their children



- May not have made the decision to visit themselves, wife/partner may have set agenda
- Father has children for the day, children may set the agenda

Grandparents



- Looking after grandchildren whilst parents work
- Having a day out with their grandchildren
- Typically a small group
- Focus on grandchild/ren
- Altruistic

Carers, au pairs and nannies



- Highly structured day
- Accountable for activities
- Focus on outcomes
- Disciplined and attentive
- Learning and fun

Multi-generational family groups



- Out of town visitors
- Elaborate visiting rituals
- Diverse needs and expectations
- Divide into smaller units in the gallery

Which departments are interested in family group visitors?

- Marketing
- Learning and Interpretation
- Education
- Community and Outreach

Family group visitors are targeted as a growing audience sector. There is increasing competition to attract new visitors and retain existing visitors, and exhibitions are often designed with family activity in mind.



Families visiting art galleries and museums are not a homogenous group

- Mother and teenage child-high level discussion, object centred, course related
- Couple with 4 year old, maintenance and family dynamics paramount
- Grandmother and 10 year old granddaughter, companionable, leisurely, talkative
- Father with 6 and 7 year olds, directive, distracted, anxious
- Mother and friend with 3 children, anarchic, relaxed, intermittently engaged

Families are Social Units

- Reasons for visiting include
- ‘My child enjoys art’
- ‘To give the children something to think about in art’
- ‘To show grandma the gallery’
- ‘To give dad a guided tour’
- ‘My granddaughter came with school’



Research context in the UK

- Government is driving the impetus towards a research agenda in art galleries because they are 'central to networks of knowledge, engaging with people locally, nationally and internationally...supporting community identity and cohesion' (Estelle Morris, Minister for Culture and Sport)
- There is scope to develop a national framework for research in the UK, building on the methodological strengths and practical experience of the best UK studies (Arts Council of Great Britain)



More examples/working together

- Contact

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