Australian Museum

Alexander the Great: 2000 Years of Treasures

Chris Lang
May 2013

nature culture **discover**

Australian museum

Table of Contents

> Introduction 3

> Exhibition floorplan 4

> Exit Survey Results 5

> Tracking Results 16

> Engagement by exhibit area 18

> Interactives 19

Introduction

Alexander the Great: 2000 years of treasures ran from 24 November 2012 to 28 April 2013 in the ground floor galleries. It consisted of over 400 objects from the collection of the State Hermitage in St Petersburg, Russia spanning a period of almost 2,500 years.

SUMMARY

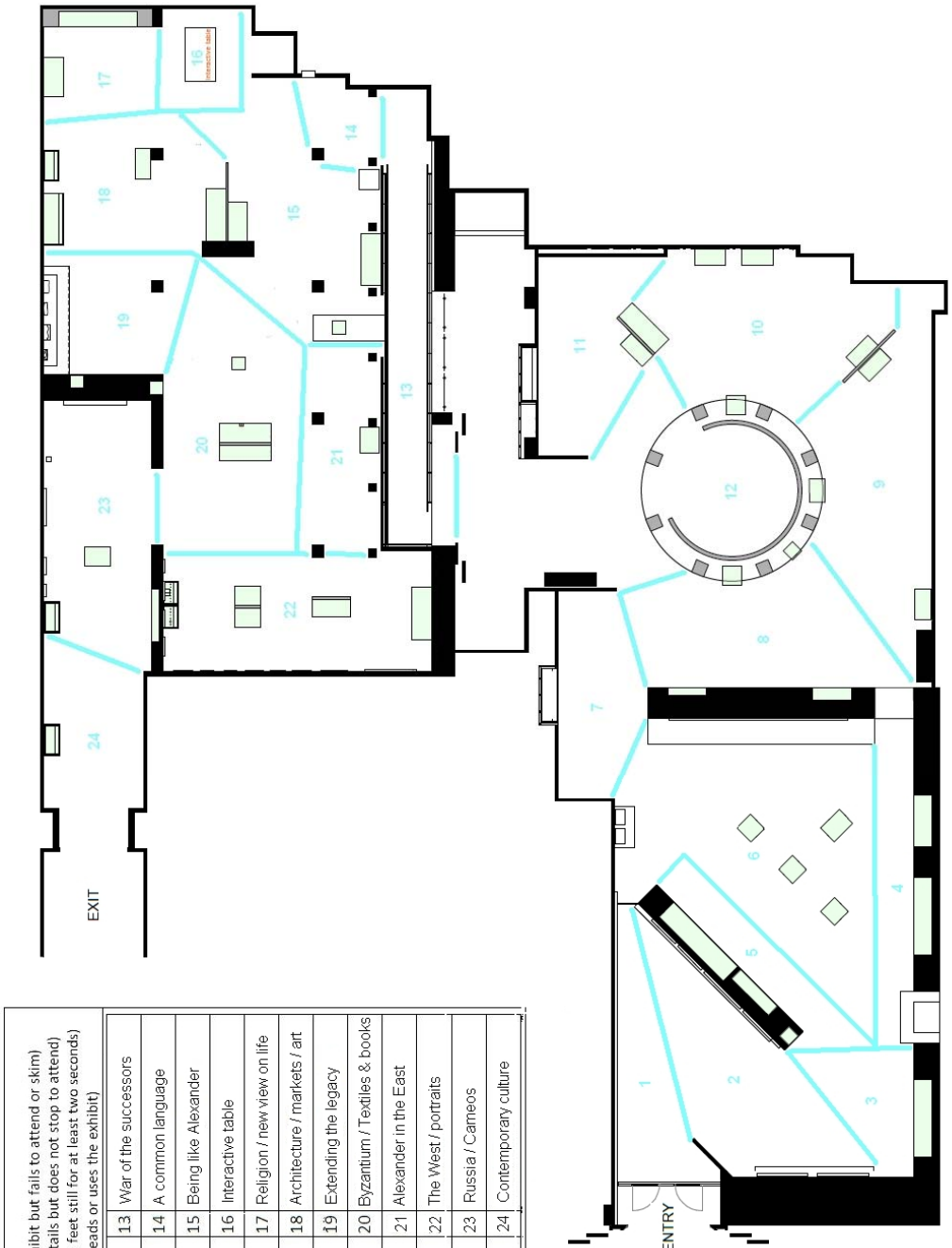
Stereotypical visitor:

- Well educated Australian female aged 50-64 visiting with one other adult.
- Visit motivated by an interest in ancient history.
- Had heard of the exhibition through word of mouth and seeing it advertised in newspaper/magazines.
- Liked the narrative, timelines, and the depiction of Alexander's by different cultures.

Findings:

- Layout and lighting both appeared in the most liked and least liked aspects of the exhibition.
- Average time spent in the exhibition was 1 hour and 16 minutes.
- Females were more engaged than males, and spent more time in the exhibition.
- The least engaging displays were the statues and tapestry, textiles and books, and the Bactria section.
- Most engaging sections were the introduction and Le Brun prints, "Forging an Empire", Egypt & Syria, and The West / Portraits
- 4% of tracked visitors exited through the entrance, compared to 16 for *Deep Oceans*. Engagement barely decreased towards the exit.
- The sections least likely to be encountered were all located in the northeast corner of the exhibition.
- 95% of visitors had heard about the exhibition before arriving, mostly through word of mouth, followed by newspapers/magazines, or online.
- The interactive table was the most engaging of the three interactives (Table, Coins iPad, Cameo iPad)

Exhibition floorplan / tracking sheet



Interactions Key
I : Ignore (Visitor passes within 2 metres of exhibit but fails to attend or skim)
S : Skim (Visitor looks briefly at the exhibit details but does not stop to attend)
A : Attend (Visitor stops at the exhibit with both feet still for at least two seconds)
E : Engage (Visitor is clearly active and intently reads or uses the exhibit)

	1 Intro (From Man to Myth)		13 War of the successors
	2 Charles Le Brun prints		14 A common language
	3 Weapons / armour		15 Being like Alexander
	4 Greeks & Barbarians		16 Interactive table
	5 Jewellery / pottery		17 Religion / new view on life
	6 Statues / Tapestry		18 Architecture / markets / art
	7 Forging an Empire		19 Extending the legacy
	8 Egypt & Syria		20 Byzantium / Textiles & books
	9 Persia		21 Alexander in the East
	10 Bactria		22 The West / portraits
	11 India		23 Russia / Cameos
	12 Death of Alexander		24 Contemporary culture

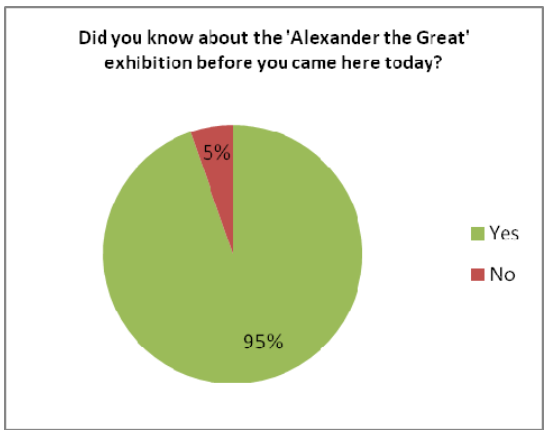
Date	**Gender** O Male O Female
Time of arrival	**Age** O Adult O Teen O Child
Time of departure	**Group** O Alone O Couple O Family O Friends O School group
Comments	

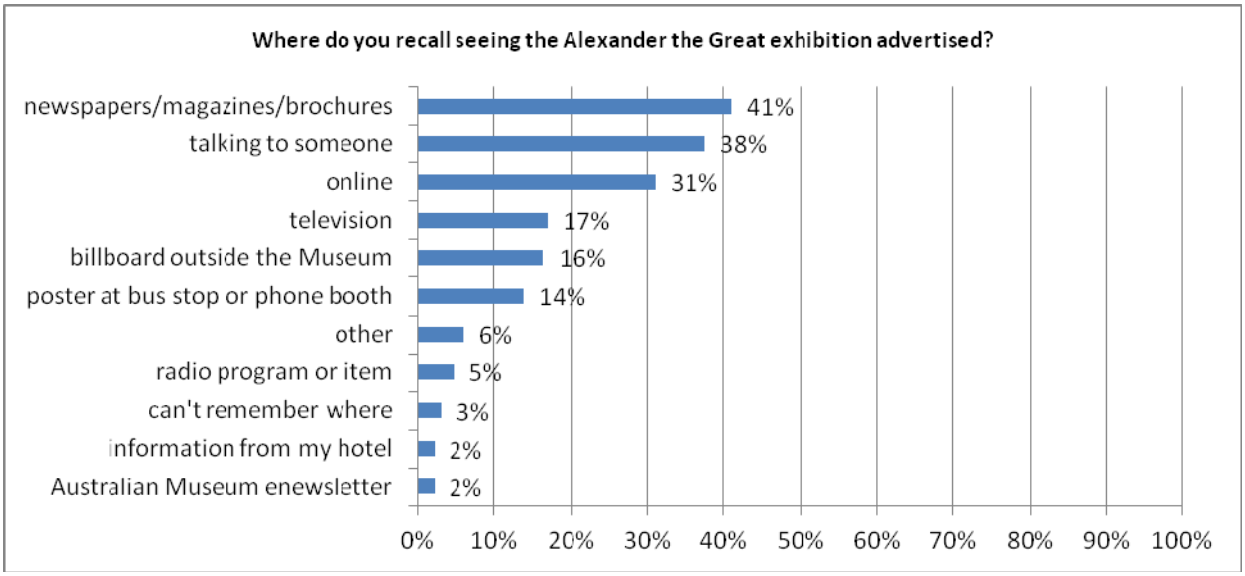
Surveyor: _____

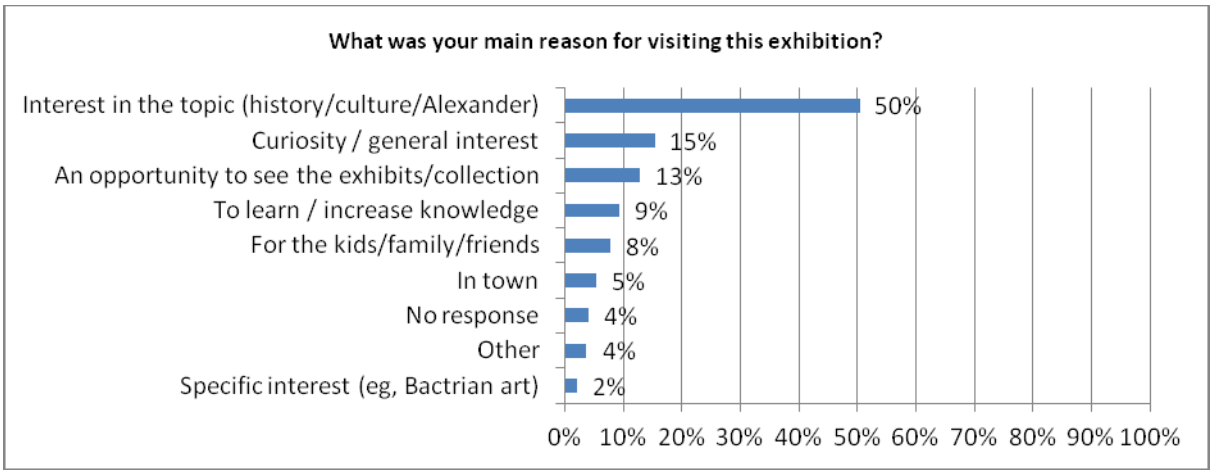
Exit survey results

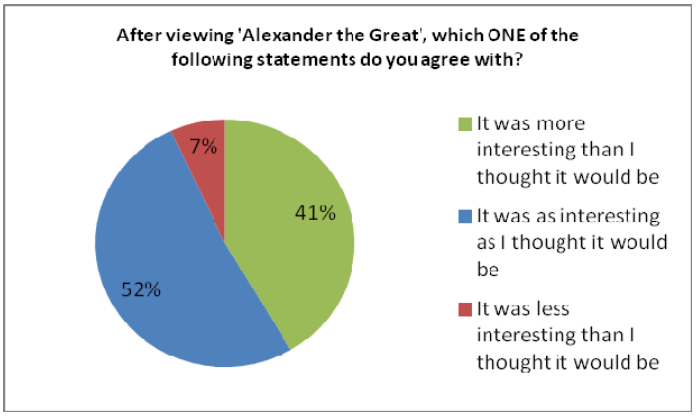
248 face to face surveys were conducted between December 2012 and February 2013 of visitors who had just exited the *Alexander the Great* exhibition.

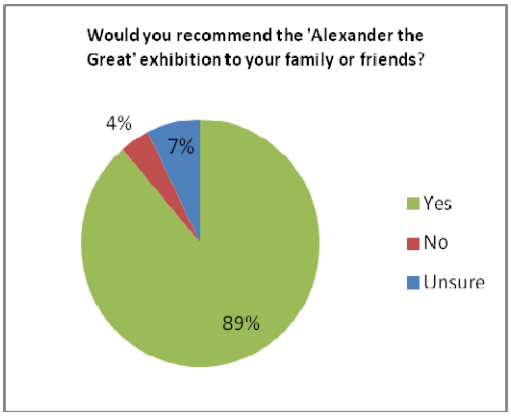
RESPONSES



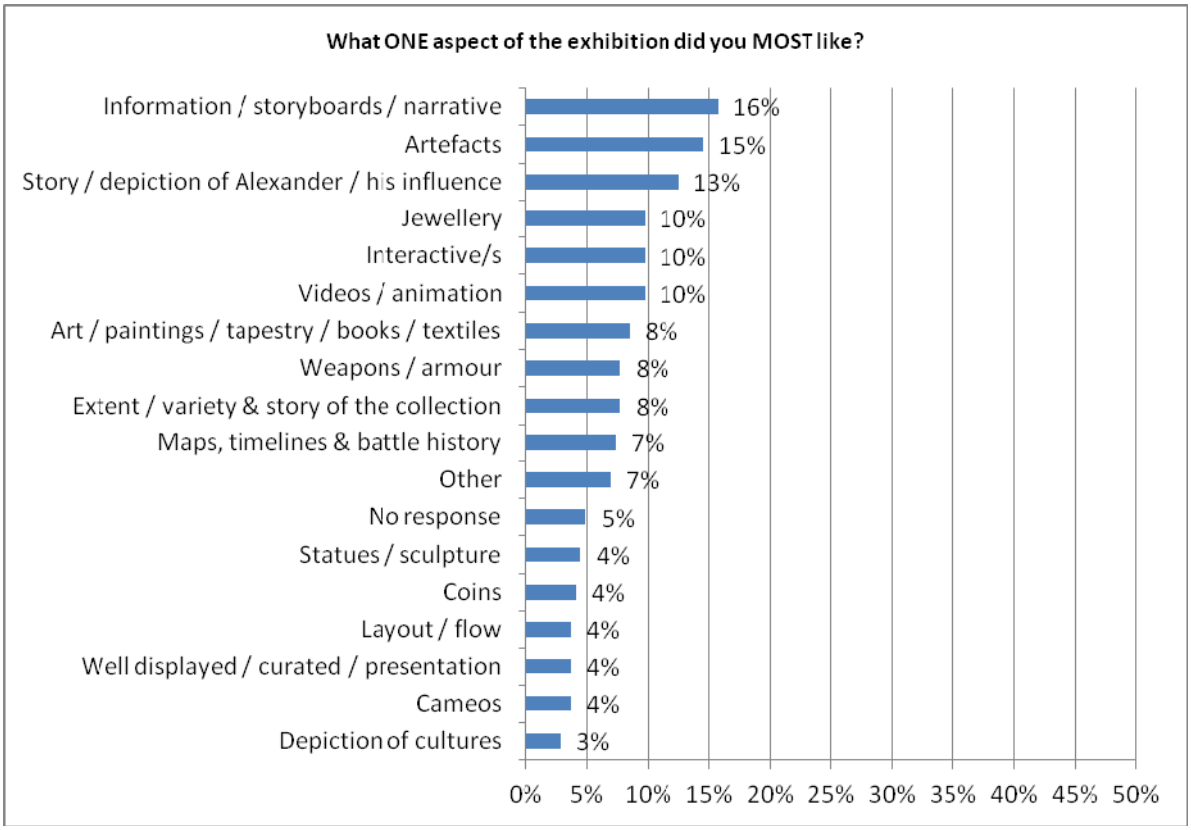


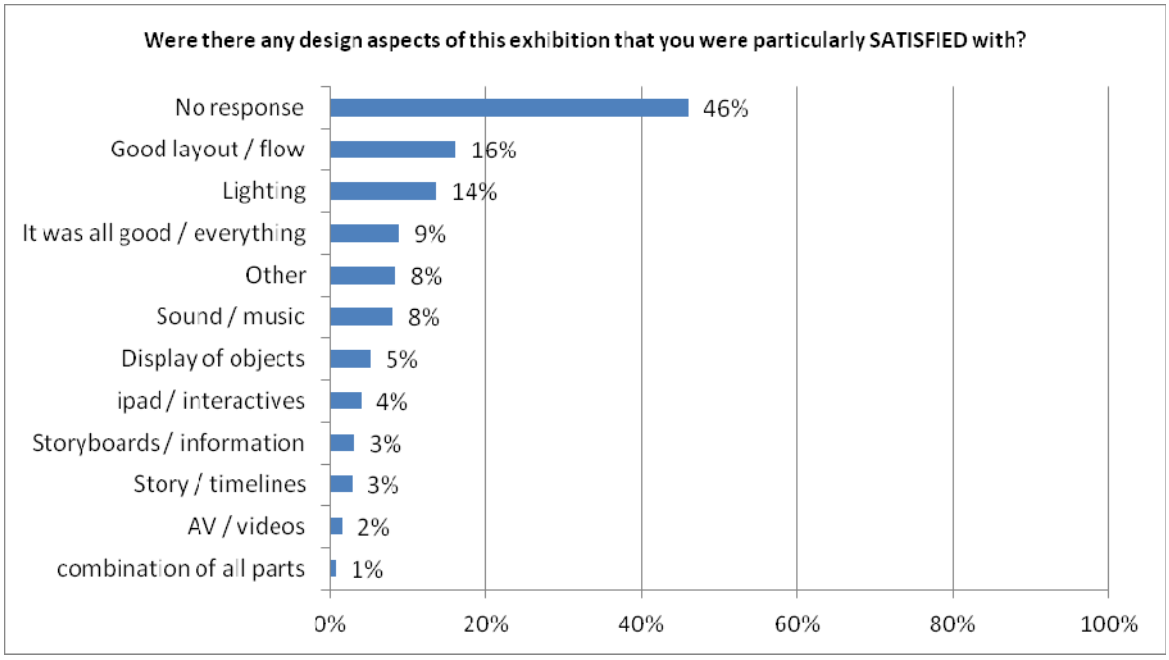


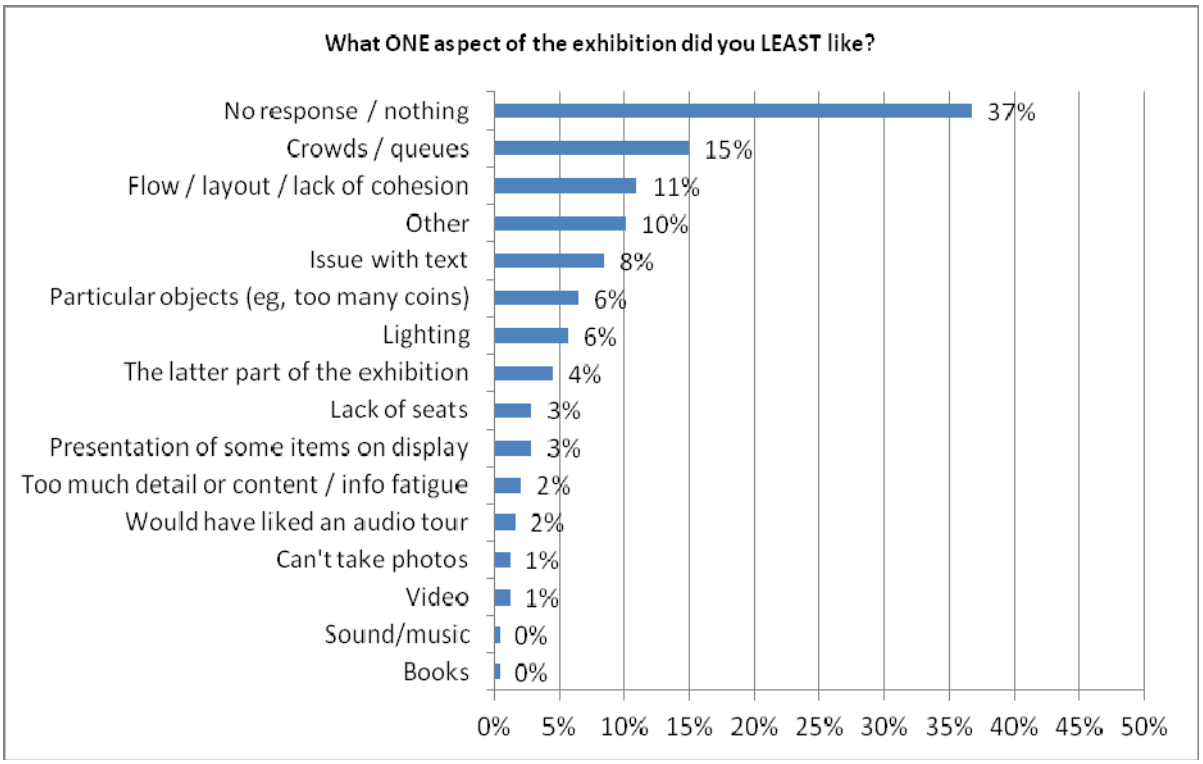


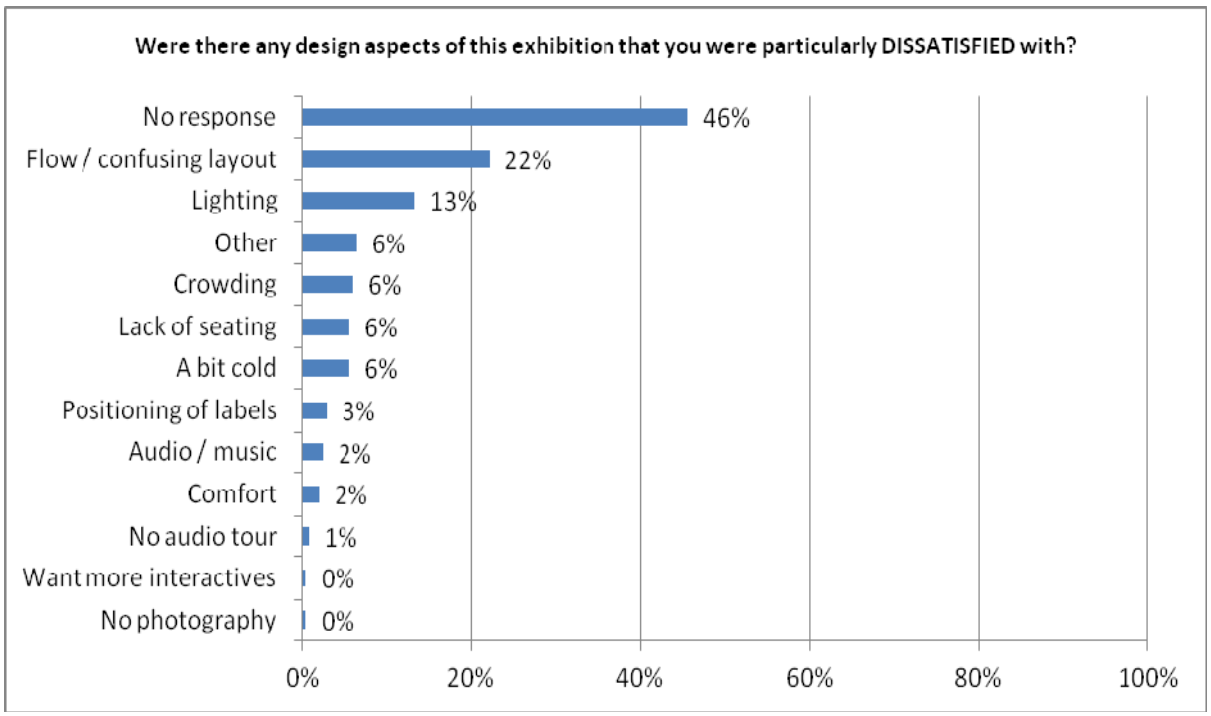


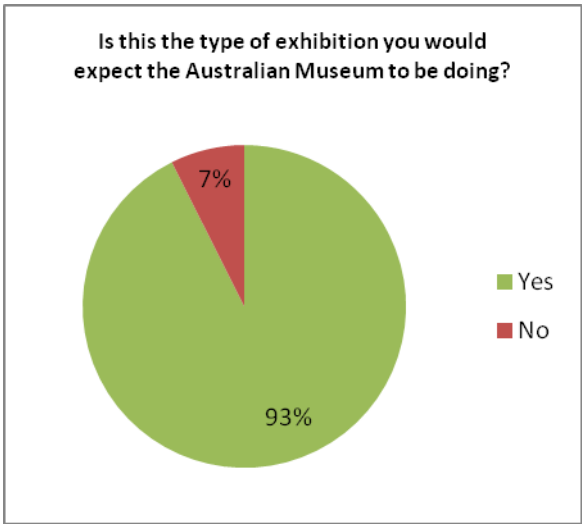
What words would you use to describe how you felt in the 'Alexander the Great' exhibition?

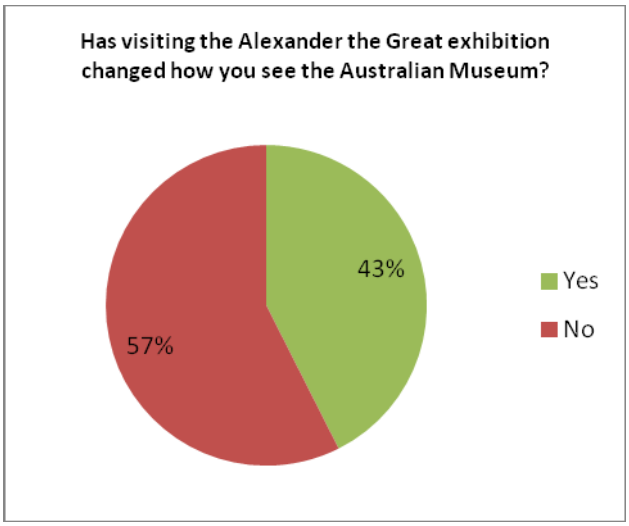

What ONE aspect of the exhibition did you MOST like?
Information / storyboards / narrative 16%
Artefacts 15%
Story / depiction of Alexander / his influence 13%
Jewellery 10%
Interactive/s 10%
Videos / animation 10%
Art / paintings / tapestry / books / textiles 8%
Weapons / armour 8%
Extent / variety & story of the collection 8%
Maps, timelines & battle history 7%
Other 7%
No response 5%
Statues / sculpture 4%
Coins 4%
Layout / flow 4%
Well displayed / curated / presentation 4%
Cameos 4%
Depiction of cultures 3%
0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%


Were there any design aspects of this exhibition that you were particularly SATISFIED with?
No response 46%
Good layout / flow 16%
Lighting 14%
It was all good / everything 9%
Other 8%
Sound / music 8%
Display of objects 5%
ipad / interactives 4%
Storyboards / information 3%
Story / timelines 3%
AV / videos 2%
combination of all parts 1%
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%


What ONE aspect of the exhibition did you LEAST like?
No response / nothing 37%
Crowds / queues 15%
Flow / layout / lack of cohesion 11%
Other 10%
Issue with text 8%
Particular objects (eg, too many coins) 6%
Lighting 6%
The latter part of the exhibition 4%
Lack of seats 3%
Presentation of some items on display 3%
Too much detail or content / info fatigue 2%
Would have liked an audio tour 2%
Can't take photos 1%
Video 1%
Sound/music 0%
Books 0%
0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%

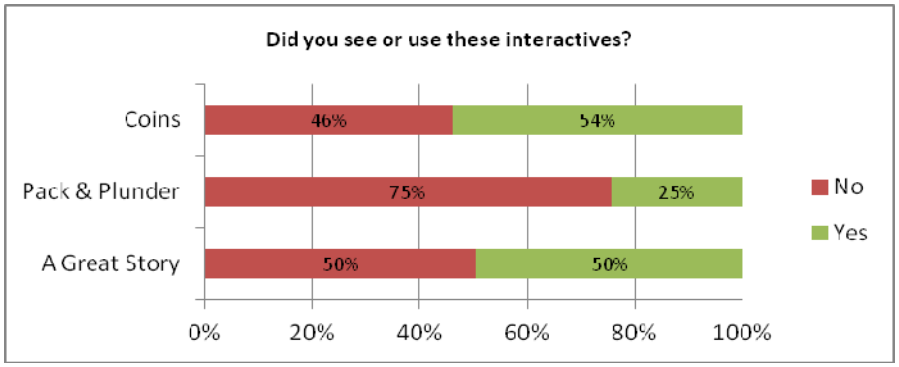

Were there any design aspects of this exhibition that you were particularly DISSATISFIED with?
No response 46%
Flow / confusing layout 22%
Lighting 13%
Other 6%
Crowding 6%
Lack of seating 6%
A bit cold 6%
Positioning of labels 3%
Audio / music 2%
Comfort 2%
No audio tour 1%
Want more interactives 0%
No photography 0%
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

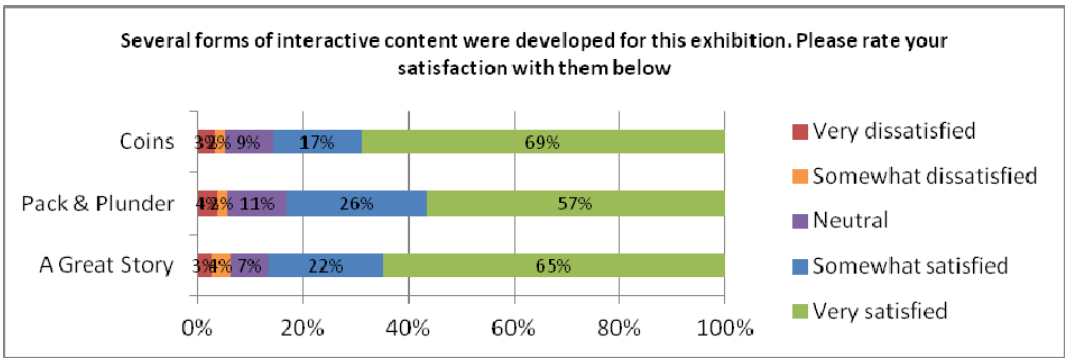


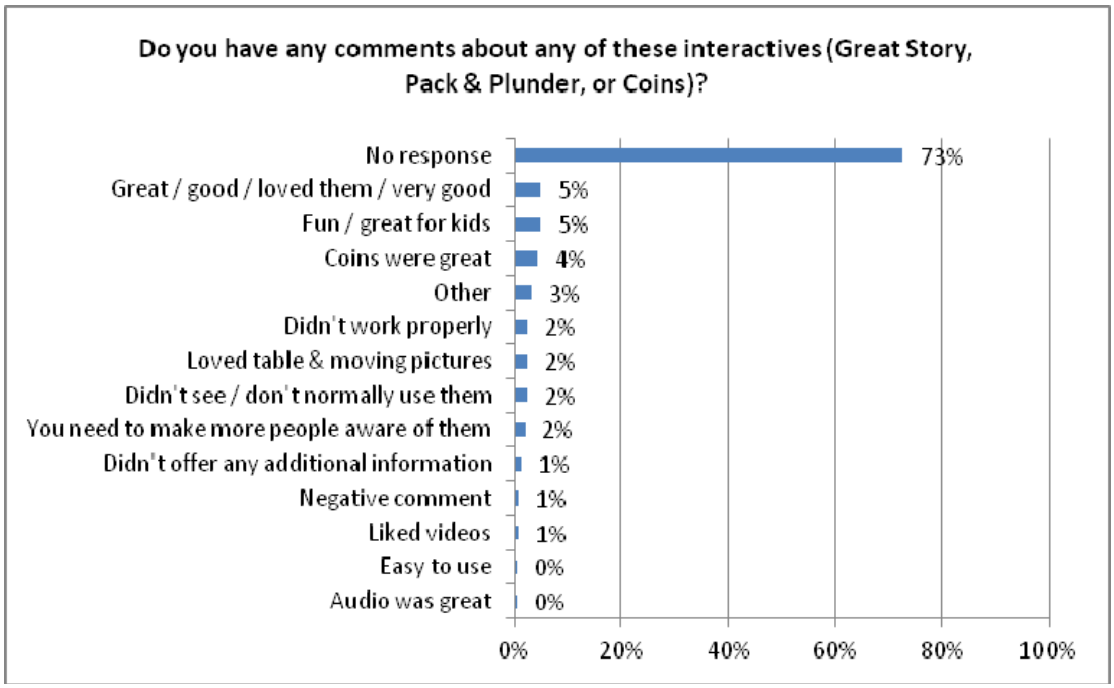


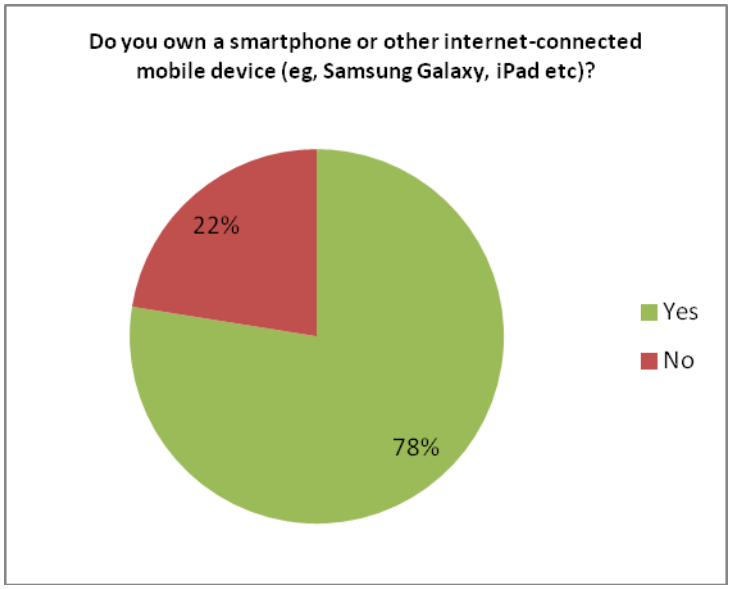
Do you have any other comments about the exhibition in general?

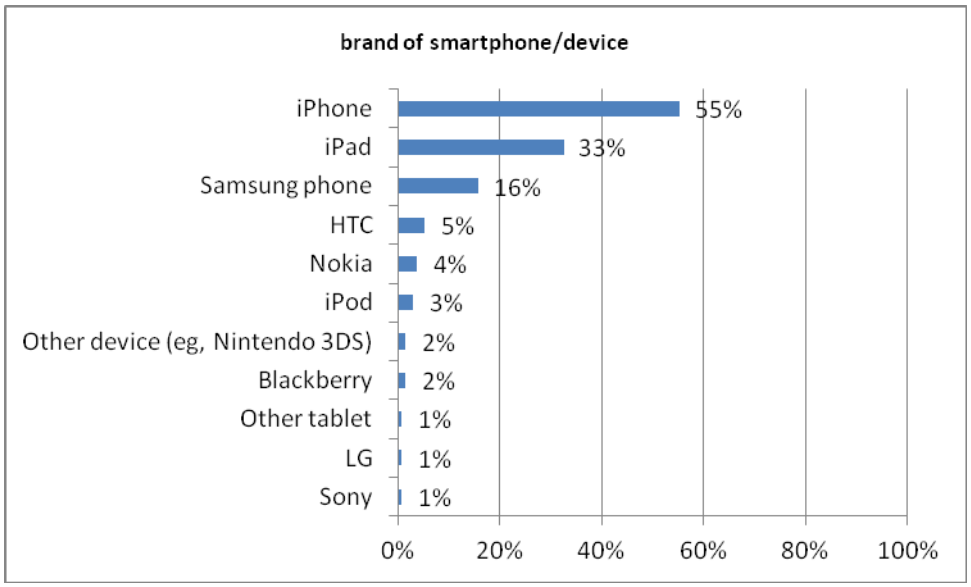
INTERACTIVES & TECHNOLOGY



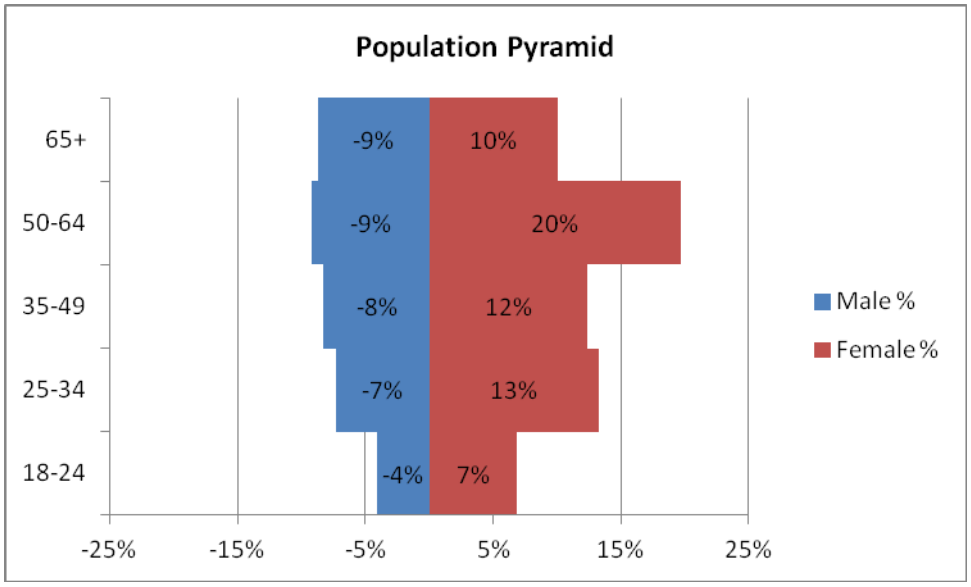


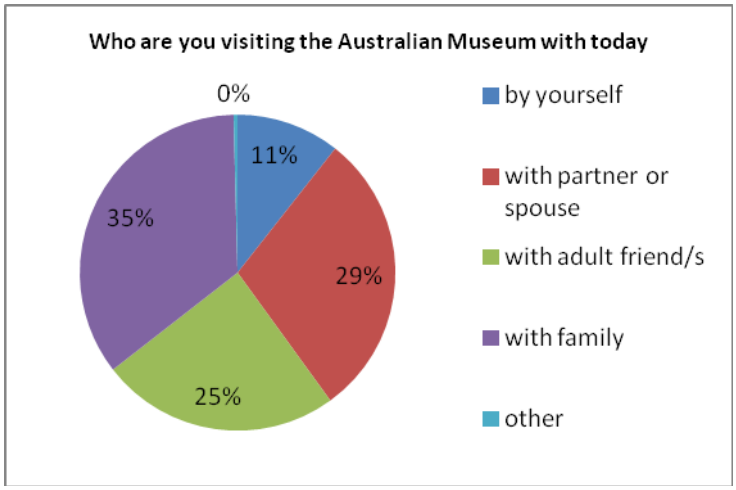


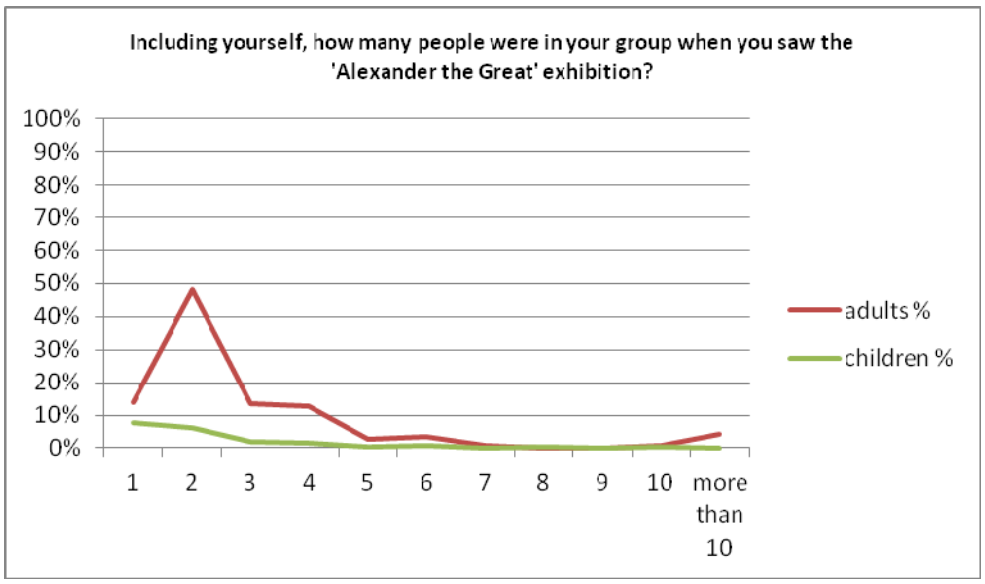

Do you own a smartphone or other internet-connected mobile device (eg, Samsung Galaxy, iPad etc)?
22%
78%
Yes
No

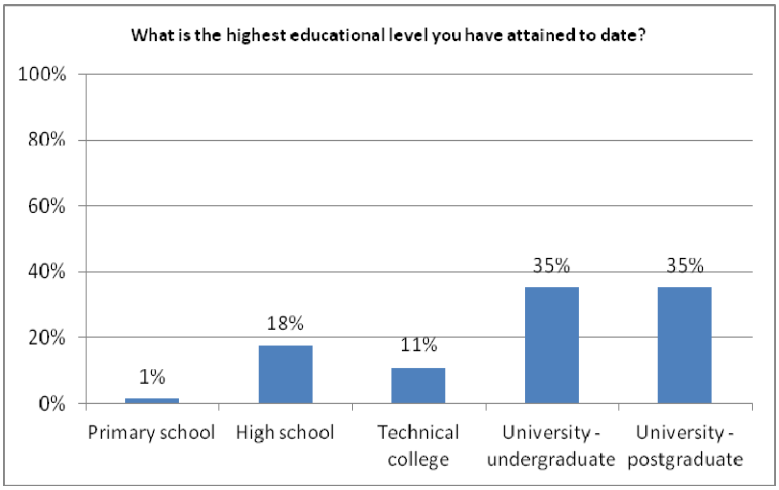

brand of smartphone/device
iPhone 55%
iPad 33%
Samsung phone 16%
HTC 5%
Nokia 4%
iPod 3%
Other device (eg, Nintendo 3DS) 2%
Blackberry 2%
Other tablet 1%
LG 1%
Sony 1%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%

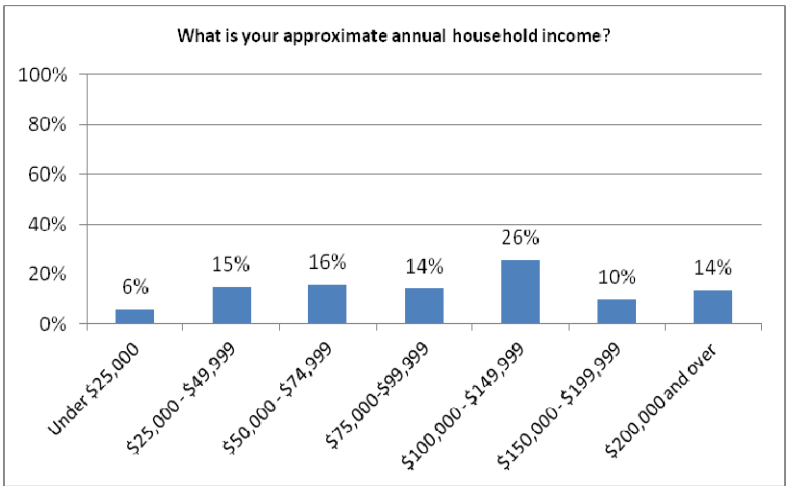
EXIT SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

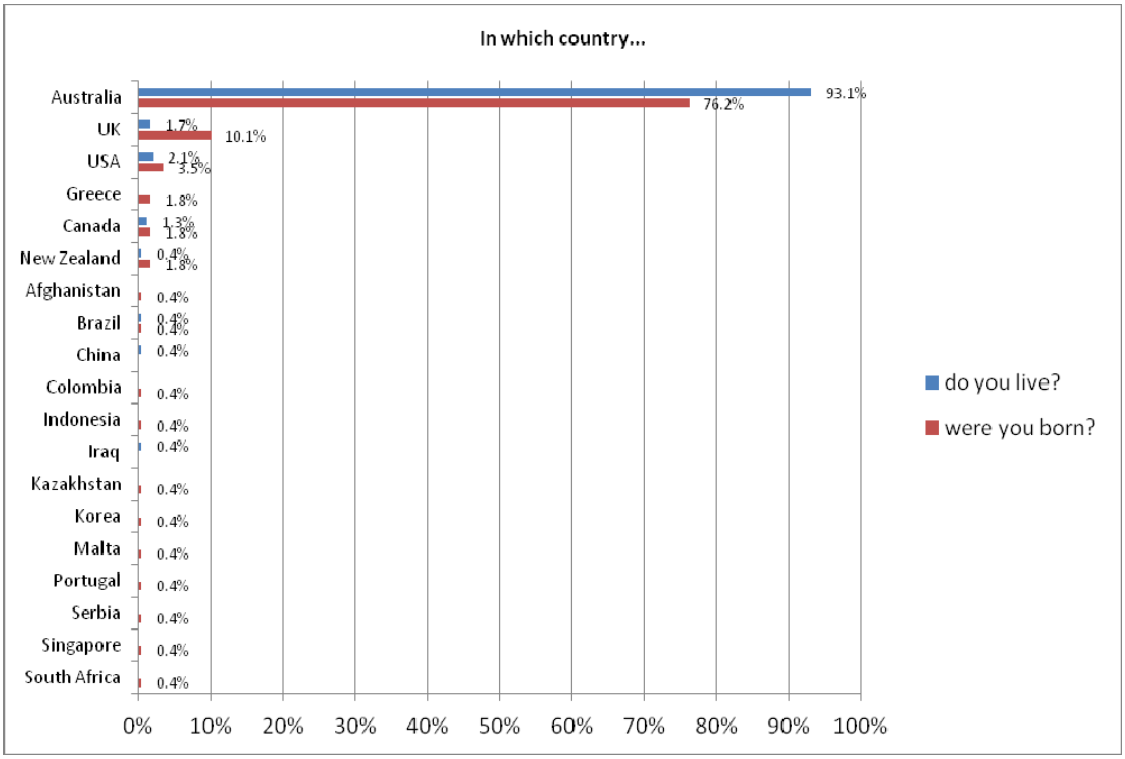







What is the highest educational level you have attained to date?
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
1%
18%
11%
35%
35%
Primary school
High school
Technical college
University - undergraduate
University - postgraduate


What is your approximate annual household income?
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
6%
15%
16%
14%
26%
10%
14%
Under $25,000
$25,000 - $49,999
$50,000 - $74,999
$75,000-$99,999
$100,000 - $149,999
$150,000 - $199,999
$200,000 and over


In which country...
Australia
UK
USA
Greece
Canada
New Zealand
Afghanistan
Brazil
China
Colombia
Indonesia
Iraq
Kazakhstan
Korea
Malta
Portugal
Serbia
Singapore
South Africa
93.1%
76.2%
1.7%
10.1%
2.1%
3.5%
1.8%
1.3%
1.8%
0.4%
1.8%
0.4%
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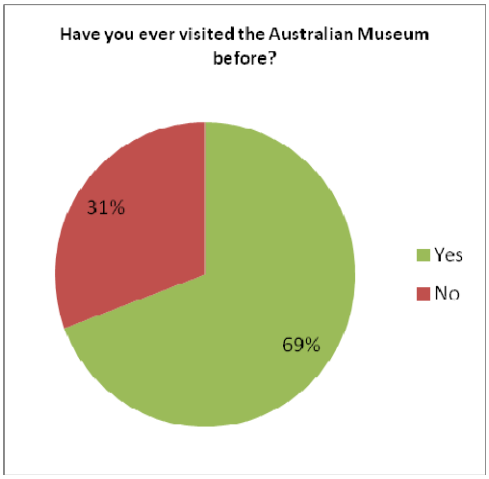
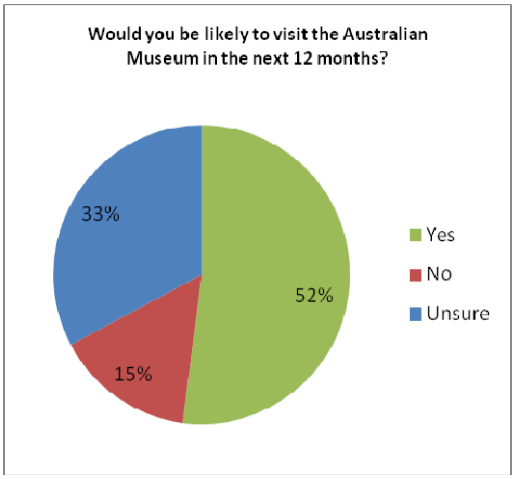
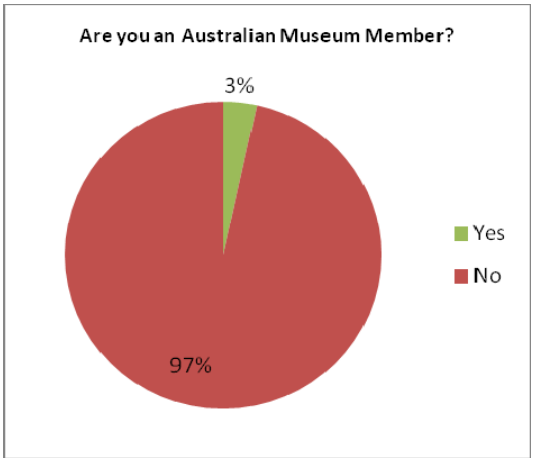
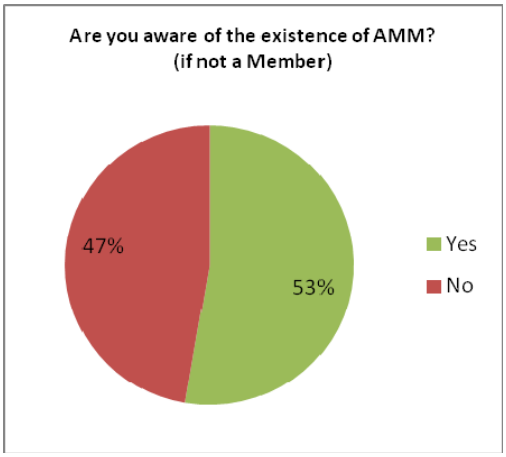
0.4%
0.4%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
do you live?
were you born?

MUSEUM VISITATION

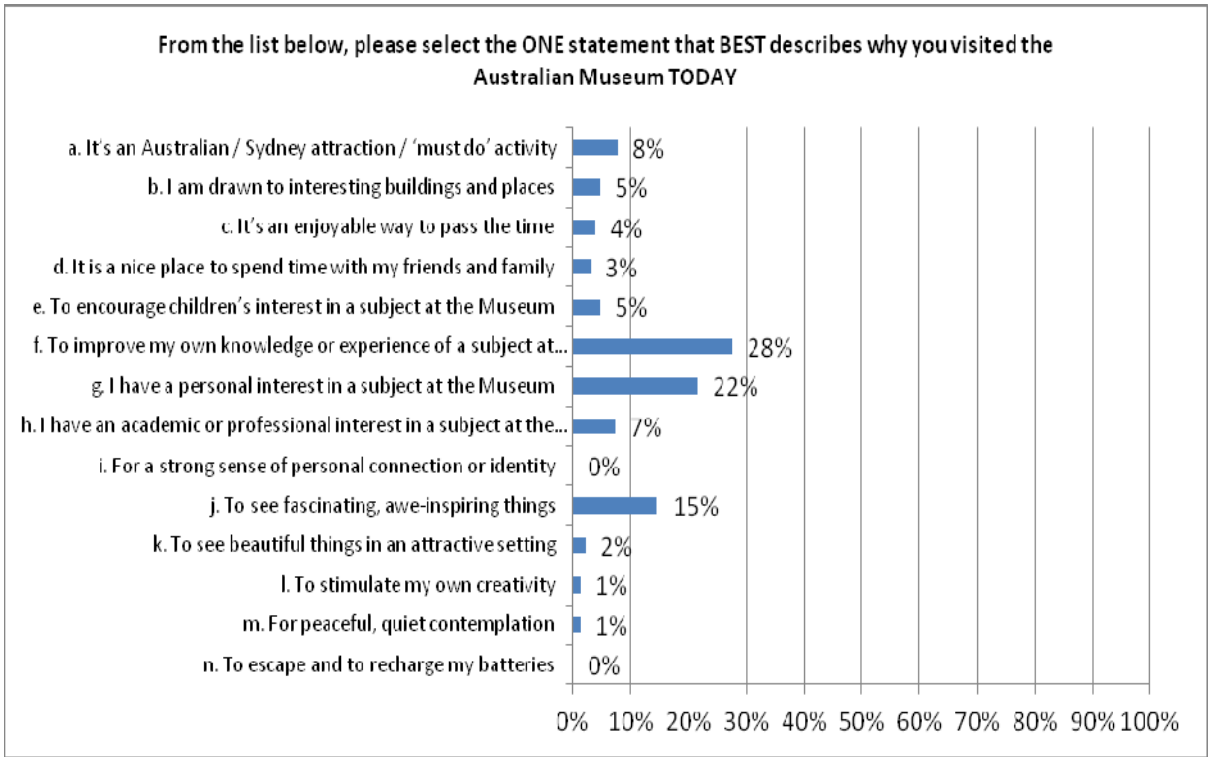


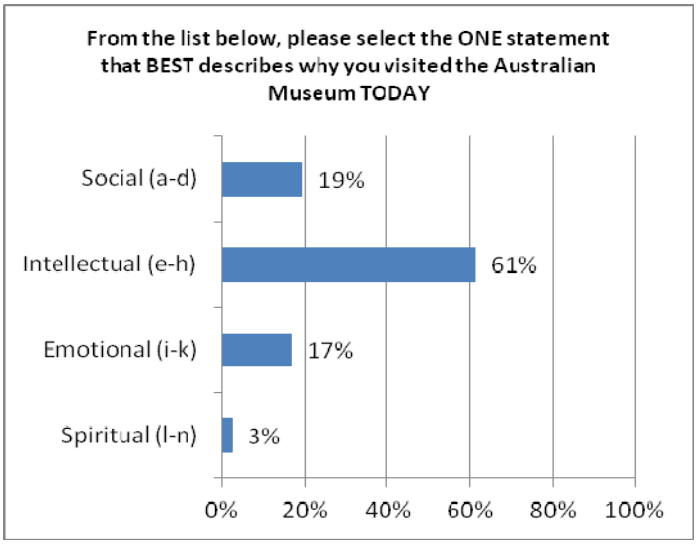






In one sentence, please describe what you think is the purpose of the Australian Museum?


From the list below, please select the ONE statement that BEST describes why you visited the Australian Museum TODAY
a. It's an Australian / Sydney attraction / 'must do' activity
b. I am drawn to interesting buildings and places
c. It's an enjoyable way to pass the time
d. It is a nice place to spend time with my friends and family
e. To encourage children's interest in a subject at the Museum
f. To improve my own knowledge or experience of a subject at...
g. I have a personal interest in a subject at the Museum
h. I have an academic or professional interest in a subject at the...
i. For a strong sense of personal connection or identity
j. To see fascinating, awe-inspiring things
k. To see beautiful things in an attractive setting
l. To stimulate my own creativity
m. For peaceful, quiet contemplation
n. To escape and to recharge my batteries
8%
5%
4%
3%
5%
28%
22%
7%
0%
15%
2%
1%
1%
0%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%


From the list below, please select the ONE statement that BEST describes why you visited the Australian Museum TODAY
Social (a-d)
Intellectual (e-h)
Emotional (i-k)
Spiritual (l-n)
19%
61%
17%
3%
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Tracking Results

110 tracking studies were made over the period between November 2012 and February 2013, between 11am and 4pm. Observations were carried out by interns and contracted surveyors, tracing the routes taken by visitors and noting how they engage with various display areas.

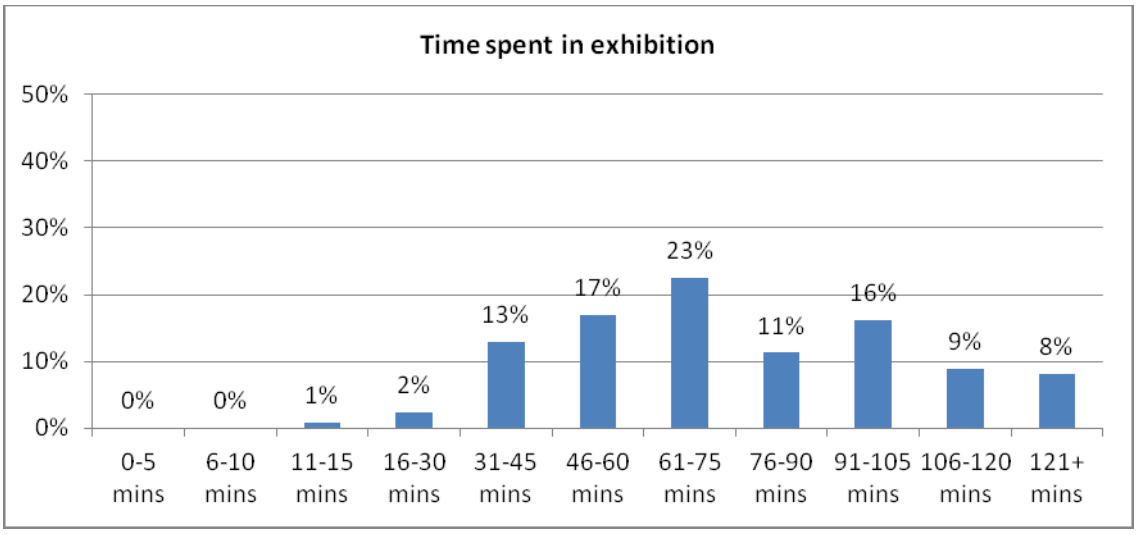
Visitors were classified as being an adult, teenager or child, and whether they came alone, with friends, as a couple, as a family, or a school group.

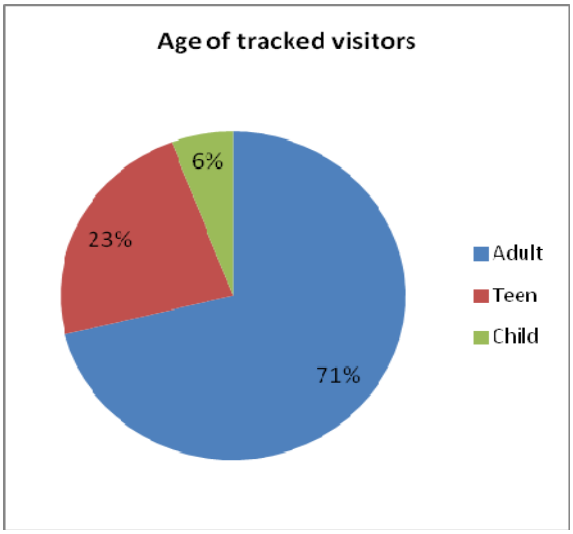
The observed behaviour of visitors at each area in the exhibition was divided into the following categories:

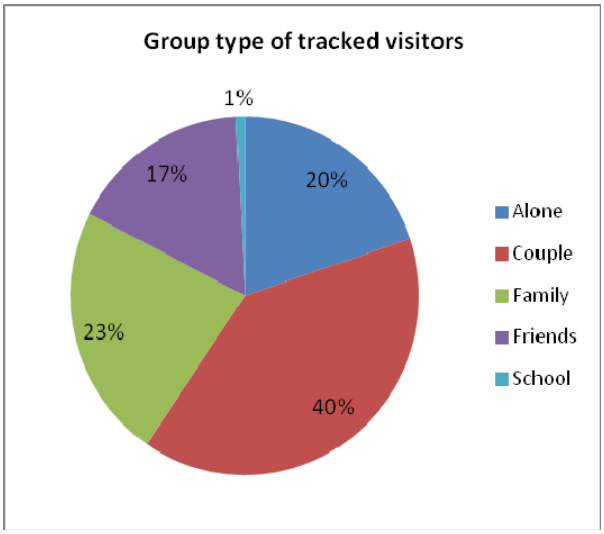
Engage (E)	Visitor is clearly active and intently reads or uses exhibit
Attend (A)	Visitor stops at exhibit with both feet still for at least two seconds
Skim (S)	Visitor looks briefly at exhibit details but does not stop to attend
Ignore (I)	Visitor passes within two meters of exhibit but fails to attend or skim

Observations:

- Only 4% exited through the entrance, compared to 16% during *Deep Oceans*.
- The average time spent in the exhibition was 1 hour and 16 minutes, and ranged from 13 minutes to 2 hours and 16 minutes. Adults with families spent the most time in the exhibition.
- Engagement barely decreased as one progresses through the exhibition. Adults who were alone were the most engaged, followed by adults with family.







Average Time and Engagement by demographic:

avg. Time	Adult	Teen	Child	ALL
Family	1:24	1:12	1:08	1:19
Couple	1:15	1:04	*	1:15
Friends	1:18	1:06	-	1:20
Alone	1:13	1:12	*	1:13
ALL	1:16	1:08	1:08	1:16

avg. Eng.	Adult	Teen	Child	ALL
Family	3.16	2.86	2.83	2.99
Couple	3.10	2.90	*	3.09
Friends	3.05	3.01	-	3.07
Alone	3.20	2.96	*	3.20
ALL	3.12	2.94	2.83	3.09

* = insufficient numbers to calculate an average
- = no data collected for this

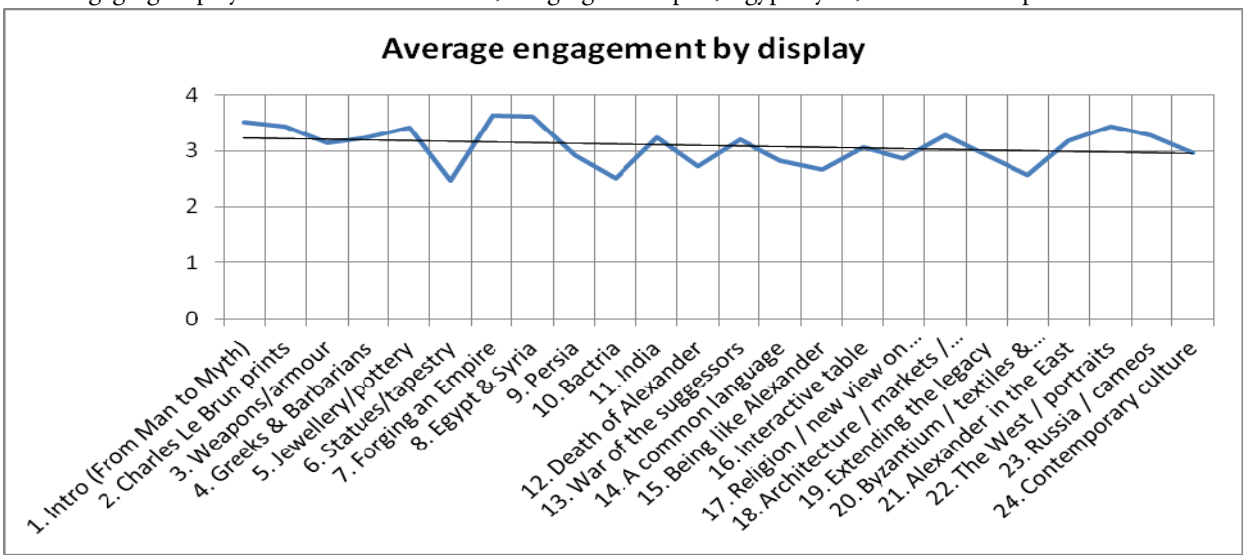
Gender	Average Time	Average Engagement
Male	1:11	3.01
Female	1:18	3.15

Engagement by exhibit area

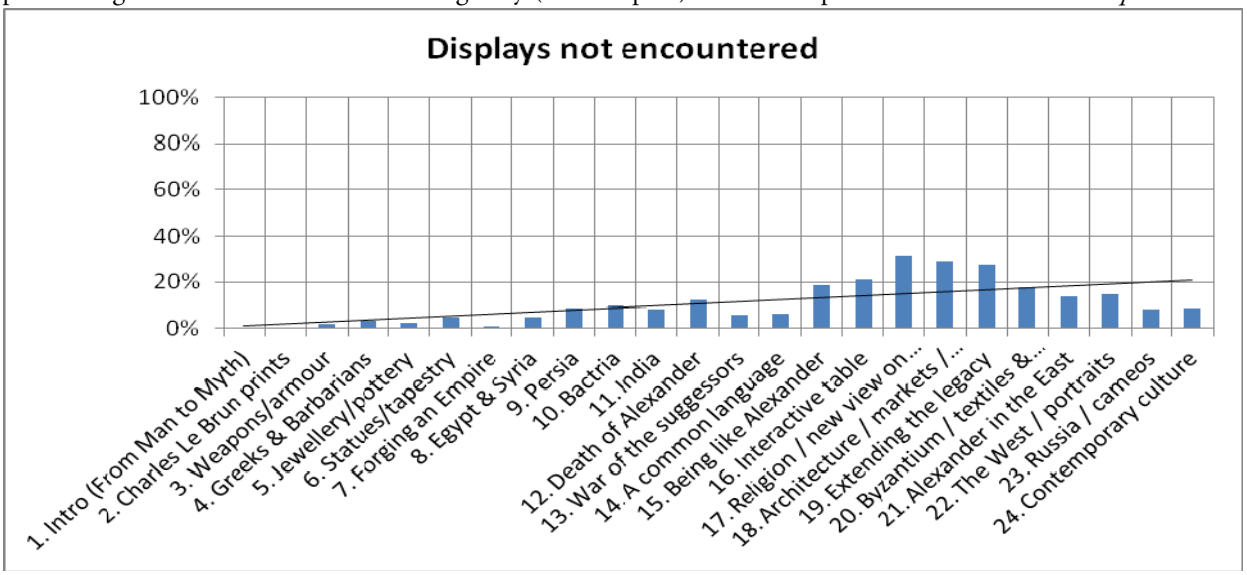
The degrees of engagement (Engage, Attend, Skim, Ignore) were quantified on a scale of 1 to 4 so that the average level of engagement for each area and for each demographic could be calculated. An average of 4 would mean that all those observed engaged with that particular section, while a rating of 1 would mean that everybody ignored it. If a visitor did not approach within 2 metres of a display this was also recorded.

The average level of engagement across the entire exhibition was 3.09, higher than *Deep Oceans*.

Average engagement by display barely decreased towards the end of the exhibition (indicated by the trend line in the chart below). The two least engaging displays were the "Bactria" section, Statues/Tapestry, and the display of textiles and books (the latter of which may have been due to nearby more engaging displays and videos). The most engaging displays were the Introduction, Forging an Empire, Egypt/Syria, and the West/portraits.



The number of visitors who did not encounter displays is plotted below, and increases through the exhibition. Approximately 30% of observed visitors did not encounter the Religion, Architecture, and Extending the Legacy displays. Approximately 20% did not encounter the interactive table. These are all possibly due to their positioning in the northeast corner of the gallery (see floorplan) as a similar pattern was observed in *Deep Oceans*.



Interactives

30 visitors were observed at each of the three types of interactives in Alexander the Great:

- Cameo iPad
- Coins iPads
- Interactive table

Engagement

The observed behaviour of visitors at interactive was divided into the following categories:

- Engage (E) Visitor is clearly active and intently reads or uses exhibit
- Attend (A) Visitor stops at exhibit with both feet still for at least two seconds
- Skim (S) Visitor looks briefly at exhibit details but does not stop to attend
- Ignore (I) Visitor passes within two meters of exhibit but fails to attend or skim

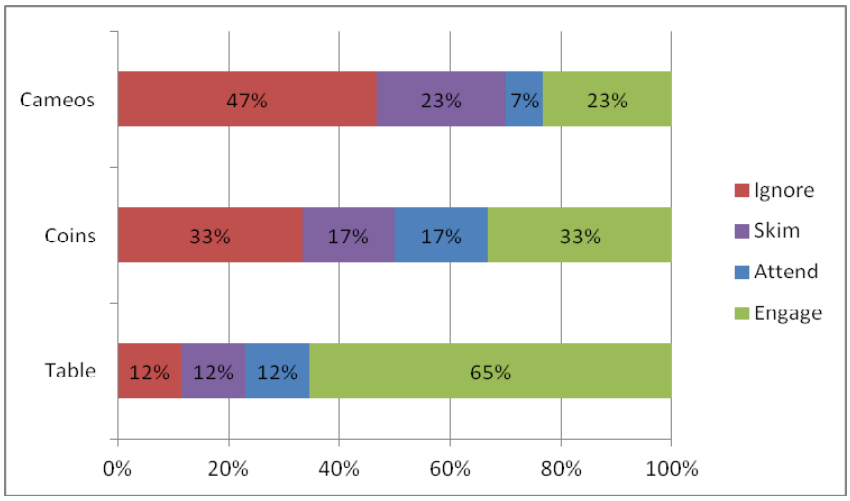


Figure 1. The Table was by far the most engaging of the three interactives.

Time spent

The amount of time that visitors skimmed, attended or engaged with each interactive was also measured.

	Min time	Max time	Avg time
Cameos	0:21	1:12	0:44
Coins	0:11	2:21	0:55
Table	0:31	7:11	3:00

Figure 2. The Table was again the most successful, with an average engagement time of 3 minutes and a maximum of 7 minutes 11 seconds observed.