

Glossary

Museum Basics - T. Ambrose, C. Payne, p. 311-314

Access Plan A document that sets out what the barriers are that prevent people gaining the maximum benefit from the museum, and how they can be avoided or removed

Animatronics Models of people or animals that move mechanically

Attractor A place or facility to which tourist visitors are attracted.

Brief Written instructions for architect or designer, describing what is wanted. Sometimes known as *Functional Brief* (because it describes how the museum or gallery must function) or (in US English) *Functional Program*.

Carers People who look after children on a voluntary or professional basis. For adults, the preferred term is personal assistant

Case-for-support A written statement of need used for fundraising purposes

Conservator A specialist in the scientific care and treatment of museum objects and specimens. Conservators have a postgraduate training in a specialist field, for example archaeological objects, natural history specimens, ceramics, oil paintings or works of art on paper. Some conservators also have craft skills, for example in cabinet-making. Conservators are also able to advise on the best arrangements for caring for collections, and carry out treatment of objects that reverses or slows down their deterioration. For this, they require a well-equipped laboratory. *Conservator* in this museum sense should not be confused with other uses of the term in English: for an architect who cares for historic buildings, and for a biologist who cares for the natural environment.

Dehumidifier An item of equipment electrically operated designed to decrease the level of relative humidity where environmental conditions are too damp

Desk research Information gathered from published and non-published sources

Destination A location at macro or micro level that attracts visitors

Diffuser panel A panel of translucent plastic or other similar material used to diffuse or spread light from a light source. Diffuser panels are often used in display cases to obtain a more even light for display purposes

Diorama A three-dimensional presentation technique consisting of scenes based on models in the foreground and painted backgrounds or surrounds

Director The senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the museum's day-to-day operation, who reports to the museum's governing body.

Disaster Control Plan A written plan that sets out the steps a museum should take in preventing and reacting to disasters of all types

Display The means by which museums present and interpret objects to their visitors, usually involving design, text and graphics. In the United States and Canada the equivalent term is exhibit.

Exhibit The term used in the United States and Canada for the means by which museums present and interpret objects to their visitors, usually involving design, text and graphics. In British English, the equivalent term is display, while 'exhibit' means the object displayed.

Exhibition A temporary or short-term museum presentation.

Formative evaluation The techniques associated with testing the effectiveness of displays and exhibitions in process of production

Forward plan A written management plan setting out the museum's functional and planning objectives to be met over a defined period of time

Friends' groups/Friends' organisations or membership programmes An organised group of people who support the museum and its work generally through fundraising and advocacy activities of different types

Front-end evaluation The techniques associated with the testing of ideas and proposals for displays and exhibitions before production begins

Governing body/Governors Those people with overall responsibility in law for conducting the policy and affairs of the museum, and to whom the museum staff are accountable

Heritage centre A visitor facility providing interpretative displays on the cultural and/or natural history of a place or area. 'Heritage centres' that hold collections are functionally museums, although they may be called heritage centres for marketing reasons

Humidifier An item of equipment electrically operated designed to increase the level of relative humidity where environmental conditions are too dry

Hygrometer An item of equipment used to measure relative humidity

Interpretation Explaining an object, place or landscape and its significance

Lux A unit of illumination measured by a light meter

Marketing The techniques associated with developing and promoting the museum to meet the identified needs of the market

Marketing mix A balance of factors – product, price, place and promotion – which museums can control in order to influence people's attitudes towards a museum

Market intelligence Information about the market, including composition and trends

Marketplace The specific social and economic context within which a museum operates

Market research The study of the different habits, attitudes and interests of the users making up the market for a museum

Market segment An identifiable range of users or non-users within the market with shared characteristics

Market share The extent to which the museum attracts users in the overall market

Market survey A programme of investigation into the structure and nature of the market

Market penetration The degree to which a museum is successful in attracting users from the market as a whole and from particular market segments and encouraging take-up of services

Micro-environment A small space that can be controlled in terms of relative humidity and other environmental factors for special categories of material

Museum manager Any member of staff with responsibility for managing resources – people, collections, finance, buildings or equipment. It is used in this book to show that many people in a museum contribute to its effective working.

Museum product An amalgam of the quantifiable and non-quantifiable factors that go to make up the personality and identity of a museum in the mind of the user

Outreach The methods by which a museum can take services out into the community that it serves through, for example, touring exhibitions or School Loan Services

Pepper's Ghost A presentation technique based on mirrors that allows one image to replace another

Performance measurement Measuring a museum's or a person's performance

against agreed objectives and standards

Preventive conservation The processes by which a museum's collections are stored, displayed, handled and maintained in ways which do not lead to deterioration

Public relations The management of the relationship between the public and the museum

Recording thermohygrographs or electronic hygrometers An item of equipment used for the continuous recording of temperature and relative humidity levels on a weekly or monthly chart

Relative humidity (RH) Relative humidity is a ratio of water vapour in the air to the amount that it can hold if fully saturated, and is expressed as a percentage, for example 55 per cent RH

Remedial conservation The processes involved in repairing damage to collections, using specialist conservation techniques that are reversible. The need for remedial conservation is often due to poor collections management and inadequate preventive conservation measures

Service Level Agreement A contract between a funding agency and a museum, setting out what the museum will deliver in return for how much financial support.

Stakeholders Those groups of people with a real interest in the museum. Stakeholders will include funding bodies, sponsors, Friends, universities, government, collectors' groups etc. Some are more important than others!

Tableau A presentation technique consisting of a reconstructed setting with lifesize models of people or animals

Thesaurus A list of agreed names, to ensure consistency in cataloguing objects. A thesaurus usually provides synonyms, broader and narrower terms, and 'preferred' terms. Also known as 'vocabulary'.

UV-monitor An item of equipment electrically operated that measures the proportion of ultra-violet light falling on an object or display/storage area

Visitor profile The nature and demographic make-up of the museum's visitors

Volunteers' organisation An organised group of people who provide practical support to museum staff on a voluntary basis

Museum Exhibition - D. Dean

accession the process of transferring title or ownership from the providing source (field work, purchase, gift, transfer, etc.) to the museum

acid-free a term generally referring to either paper or paper-board that has been treated (buffered) or made from fibers free of organic acids

acquisition the act of gaining physical possession of an object, specimen, or sample

acrylic paint a term referring to a number of plastic, water-based paint products

affective learning learning based upon emotional response to stimuli; emotional learning

angle iron a metal construction material with a cross-section in the form of the letter "L"

anodized metal a metal which has been coated with another material through the process of electrolysis

application software that allows the computer to perform specific tasks; software program

appraisal the assigning of a monetary value to an object

architect's rule or scale a graduated device used to make scaled measurements

artifact an object, either two- or three-dimensional, that has been selected, altered, used, or made by human effort

audience all or a specially identified segment of a museum constituency

audiovisual devices machines that produce sound and images

blockbuster a term derived from the popular name of the huge German bombs used in World War II to blast large sections of a city; in the museum sense, it refers to a revolutionary, powerful exhibition

board foot a USA standard length measurement of sawn wood by which the purchase price is figured

box-in-a-box configuration a frame of reference that views micro-environments as existing in and dependent upon their surrounding macroenvironments

buffer a material or condition interposed between two other materials or conditions to reduce or slow the interaction between them

case furniture structures used within cases, vitrines, or on bases that serve as supporting surfaces for objects/graphics

cataloging assigning an object to an established classification system and initiating a record of the nomenclature, provenance, number, and location of that object in the collection storage area

ceiling grid generally refers to the metal support structure for drop ceilings

coating paint, stain, or plaster used to finish a surface

cognitive learning knowledge based upon reasoned thought; rational learning

collection an identifiable selection of objects having some significant commonality

collection manager a person charged with the care of a particular collection, normally working under the direction of a curator

collective medium a particular means of expression used by more than one person in a collective effort, and for predetermined and agreed upon goals

comfort freedom from stress or the fear of failure

communication “the transfer of information and ideas with the deliberate intention to achieve certain changes, deemed desirable by the sender, in the knowledge, opinions, attitudes and/or behavior of the receiver [*sic*]”

composite board any material made of wood chips or sawdust bonded into sheets with adhesives; this includes materials such as particle board, chip board, and masonite

concept-oriented exhibition a presentation that is focused upon the transmission of information and in which collection objects may or may not be used to support the story rather than being the main emphasis

conflict of interest those acts or activities that may be construed to be contrary to ethical museum practices based on knowledge, experience, and contracts gained through conditions of employment

conservation the processes of preserving and protecting objects from loss, decay, damage, or other forms of deterioration

conservator a person with the appropriate scientific training to examine museum objects, work to prevent their deterioration, and provide the necessary treatment and repairs

controlled environment surroundings in which temperature, relative humidity, direct sunlight, pollution, and other atmospheric conditions are regulated

coordinating activities efforts aimed at keeping every task moving toward the same goal

cove base material used along the base of a wall

cultural heritage a tradition, habit, skill, art form, or institution that is passed from one generation to the next.

cultural property the material manifestation of the concepts, habits, skills, art, or institutions of a specific people in a defined period of time

curator a museum staff member or consultant who is a specialist in a particular field of study and who provides information, does research, and oversees the maintenance, use, and enhancement of collections

cursor an image on the computer monitor that indicates the location for information input or activity

deaccession the process of removing objects from a museum’s collections

deed of gift a document with the signature of the donor transferring title of an object to a museum

designer a museum staff member or consultant who designs the exhibition, does working drawings, and coordinates fabrication and installation activities

director the person providing conceptual leadership of the museum and charged with the responsibility for policy-making, funding, planning, organizing, staffing, supervising, and coordinating activities through the staff; the director is also responsible for the professional practices of the museum

display a presentation of objects for public view without significant interpretation added, relying solely upon the intrinsic merit of that which is presented. In the UK and Europe this word is used by choice instead of exhibition (q.v.)

distributed materials printed pamphlets, booklets, catalogs, gallery notes, and other materials that are distributed as part of the presentation of an exhibition

dry mount a method of bonding two surfaces together using heat-sensitive tissue and a heating instrument; normally used for mounting twodimensional objects such as photographs or drawings

drywall see “sheetrock”

drywall screw a specialized screw used for attaching sheetrock to the studs

educator a museum staff person or consultant who specializes in museum education and who produces instructional materials, advises about educational content for exhibitions, and oversees the implementation of educational programs

endowment a funding process in which a stated part of a money gift (corpus) is held to generate income and only that income may be spent

ethics the process of establishing principles of right behavior that may serve as action guides for individuals or groups

ethnic used in the museum community as a nondiscriminatory term referring to a division or group of people distinguishable by language, custom, or some special characteristic

evaluation report a document that sets down evaluation findings assessing an exhibition from the standpoints of meeting goals and successful development

exhibit (noun) a grouping of objects and interpretive materials that form a unit for presentation; the localized grouping of objects and interpretive materials that form a cohesive unit within a gallery

exhibit (verb) to present or expose to view, show, or display

exhibit case a closed, internally lit piece of exhibit furniture within which objects and/or graphics are exhibited

exhibit panel a vertical surface upon which objects/ graphics or support devices are attached for exhibit purposes, or for use as a spatial divider

exhibition (noun) a comprehensive grouping of all the elements (including exhibits and displays) that form a complete public presentation of collections and information for the public use; “An exhibition is a means of communication aiming at large groups of the public with the purpose of conveying information, ideas, and emotions relating to the material evidence of man and his surrounding, with the aid of chiefly visual and dimensional methods”

exhibition (verb) the act or fact of exhibiting collections, objects, or information to the public for the purpose of education, enlightenment, and enjoyment

exhibition policy a written document that states a museum’s philosophy and intent toward public exhibitions

expansion joint a joint between structural elements which employs a flexible separator that allows expansion and contraction of materials to occur without damage

extermination the acts of either preventing the invasion of harmful organisms or ridding a collection or collection items of an existing infestation through the use of chemical or mechanical means not considered dangerous to humans in the dosages needed to kill the pests

fabrication the work of creating the physical elements needed for the presentation of collection objects in an exhibition; the process of constructing props, preparing graphics, building cases, etc.

facility the physical components that comprise the buildings and grounds of an institution; the physical plant

fire rating a rating system developed to indicate the relative resistance a material has to burning through and its ability to prevent the spread of fire; usually measured in time units

floppy disk a portable, plastic disk coated with a material sensitive to magnetic fields that can be used to store information generated by a computer

fluorescent lighting light sources in which electric current is passed through gases in a glass tube causing them to fluoresce and produce illumination

footcandle a unit for measuring illumination equal to the amount of light reaching a surface 1 ft sq. produced by a candle 1 ft away

FormicaR a brand name that has become the generic term for numerous types of commercially produced, high-density plastic laminates

framing the method of creating a stable opening into which a window or doorway can be built

fumigation the use of a highly toxic chemical gas to kill any organisms existing in the target area or item; the chemicals utilized in fumigation are highly dangerous to humans and their use is controlled by law

furring the method of covering an I-beam or other construction element with another material to disguise it

gallery a room specifically designated for exhibitions

gallery guides a form of distributed material; written documents, usually brief and easy to carry, that are available for visitors to have and use to gain more information about an exhibition subject

graphic a two-dimensional depiction such as a photograph, painted design, drawing, silkscreen, etc. used to impart information, draw attention, or illustrate

grout material used to fill spaces between ceramic tiles

historic site a location with important historic connections usually relating to an important person or event

HVAC heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system

hydrated salts chemicals that are hydrophilic and can be used to control relative humidity in enclosed spaces; among these are sodium chloride, zinc sulfate, magnesium nitrate, magnesium chloride, and lithium chloride

hydrophilic substances materials that readily absorb atmospheric water and are used as humidity buffers

I-beam a steel beam with a cross-section that is the shape of the letter “I”

ICCROM (International Center for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property): an intergovernmental organization created by UNESCO in 1969, whose statutory functions are to collect and disseminate documentation of scientific problems of conservation; to promote research in this field; to provide advice on technical questions; and to assist in training technicians and raising the standard of restoration work.

ICOM (International Council of Museums): the international non-governmental organization of museum and professional museum workers established to advance the interests of museology and other disciplines concerned with museum management and operations.

ICOM Statutes adopted by the 16th General Assembly of ICOM in The Hague, 5 September, 1989, the *ICOM Statutes* describe and define the ICOM organization, its role, membership, method, and objectives

ICTOP (International Committee for Training of Personnel): one of the standing committees of ICOM

incandescent lighting light sources in which an electric current causes a filament to glow or incandesce, producing illumination

inert products made of non-reactive, chemically balanced materials with special attention given to acidic neutrality

infestation a population of living organisms that exists in collections or collection items; the organisms may be as large as rats and mice, or as small as moths or fungi

infrared radiation (IR): the part of the electromagnetic spectrum below visible light that humans interpret as heat

interactive a device that invites and accommodates interaction between the viewer and itself

interpretation the act or process of explaining or clarifying, translating, or presenting a personal understanding about a subject or object

inventory an itemized list of the objects included in a museum's collections

label a textual graphic that provides information

latex paint a term referring to a number of plastic, water-based paint products

lathe thin strips of material, generally wood, used to form a matrix over which some other material may be applied; for example, lathe might be used between a concrete wall and plywood panels, or a lathe matrix might be used on a ceiling before plaster is applied

layout a composition using graphic design elements placed in relation to each other

leisure activities activities that people engage in when they are not involved in a professional pursuit

lux a unit of illumination equal to the illumination of a 1 m sq. surface uniformly 1 m away from a candle; equal to 5 footcandles

macro-environments the totality of the surrounding conditions and circumstances present in spaces generally room-size and larger

management-oriented activities tasks that focus on providing the resources and personnel needed to realize a product

Maslow's Hierarchy a behavioral construction by Abraham H.Maslow that relates the sequential and consecutive nature of human needs to motivations

masonry refers to construction elements formed of brick, concrete blocks, or other similar materials

mechanical a term referring to any construction elements concerned with HVAC

micro-environments the totality of the surrounding conditions and circumstances present in small, often enclosed spaces

mildew microscopic fungi that attack organic materials that are exposed to high humidity and dampness

mission statement a written document that states a museum's institutional philosophy, scope, and responsibility

model a three-dimensional representation of an object or space usually using scaled measurements

mounting the attachment of an object/graphic to a supporting surface; the device used to attach an object

mud thinned plaster used to fill cracks and seams in a plaster or drywall surface

museology the branch of knowledge concerned with the study of the theories, procedures, concepts, and organization of museums

museum a non-profit-making, permanent institution that is in the service of society and is open to the public; it acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment

natural buffering the interaction between collection objects and their surroundings in an enclosed space that reduces or slows fluctuations in relative humidity and temperature

natural light the light produced by the sun that penetrates the Earth's atmosphere

nomenclature a system of names used to describe museum objects

object file a careful listing of all actions or activities impacting a particular object in the museum's collections including all conservation, restoration, exhibition, loan, or other uses of the object

object-oriented exhibition a presentation of collection objects with a primary goal of providing their exposure to public view with limited interpretation

open storage the practice of placing stored collections on public view without interpretation or planned educational content

particulate matter any materials capable of being airborne; dust

patrimony cultural property, both intellectual and real, passed from one generation to the next

pattern recognition a visual-mental process that seeks and recognizes familiar things or patterns

pH-balanced a neutral balance of acid and alkaline

plate the horizontal structural members in a wall (i.e., floor plate, header or top plate) to which the vertical members are attached

plenum the space above ceilings between floors or roofs

Plexiglas a brand name for formed, solid acrylic that has become a generic term used to refer to many commercially produced products; clear sheet acrylic is often used as a substitute for glass

plywood a building material made of thin sheets of sawn wood, laminated with adhesives to form larger sheets

pollutants gases and airborne particulate matter usually resulting from combustion or venting of chemicals associated with human, industrial, or other activities

preparation arranging, attaching, supporting, and other such activities that prepare an object/graphic for exhibit

presentation an oral communication of ideas using textual, graphic, and/or three-dimensional representations as aids to understanding; specifically for exhibits, the presentation of the design to the client for their consideration

preventive conservation collection care to minimize conditions that may cause damage

product-oriented activities exhibition development efforts concerned with collection objects and interpretive aims

production the combined activities of fabrication, preparation, facilities renovation, and installation of exhibitions

project manager a staff person who oversees the whole process of exhibition development by facilitating communication and assisting in providing resources, with the goal of seeing the project through to its predetermined objectives

props exhibit properties; those items such as case furniture, exhibit cases, vitrines, panels, etc. that serve as the environmental elements for the presentation of the exhibits

psychrometer a device for measuring relative humidity using the differences in the

measurements from dry- and wet-bulb thermometers in moving air

PVA (polyvinyl acetate): a thermoplastic with good aging characteristics sometimes used as a fixative or sealing agent

100 percent rag a term referring to the material content of paper or board indicating a fiber composition other than wood—usually cotton or linen

recording hygrothermograph a device for measuring and recording on a paper chart both temperature and humidity over time

registrar the person charged with registering objects accessioned into a museum's collections, maintaining the registration records, and assigning the accession number

registration assigning a permanent number to an object entering a museum's collections for the purpose of identification and collection management

relic a non-specific term used to describe things from the past, sometimes applied to ethnographic or historic objects

RH (relative humidity): the amount of water in a given volume of air compared to the amount of water vapor the same volume of air will hold at saturation (100 per cent RH) at a given temperature

scale a system of measurement ratios in which real world data are converted to fractional equivalents while retaining proportional relationships

scaled drawing a graphic representation using scaled measurements

sheetrock a construction material made of gypsum powder bonded with an adhesive and sandwiched between layers of paper; also known as gypboard or drywall

silica gel a commonly used hydrophilic substance composed of a silicon+oxygen bond, neutral toward other substances, that can be used to control relative humidity within closed containers

specimen an example of a particular class of objects normally used when referring to natural science collections

strategic planning sometimes called forward or long-range planning—the process integrates the physical, educational, fiscal, and personnel goals of the museum or a particular collection area

stud wall a wall construction method using vertical and horizontal members (wood or metal) over which a “skin” of paneling is applied

study collection objects collected and organized for research or instructional use rather than for exhibition

sub-title an intermediate level of written information graphic, usually larger in typesize than a text block, and used to differentiate or emphasize sub-groupings within an exhibition

tactile exhibits exhibits that are designed to be touched

tamper-proof requiring a specialized instrument to operate

target audience any sub-group within a population that can be identified by some common factor or factors, and that is specifically chosen as a group to be attracted

text or text block a written graphic that aids in the interpretation of groups of objects or exhibition sections

thematic exhibitions exhibitions based upon a connecting theme that directs the choice of collection objects and information content

thermo hygrometer a device for measuring temperature and humidity levels

tiles finishing elements made from a variety of different materials and usually held in place with an adhesive; ceramic, vinyl, and acoustic are a few of the materials used

title sign a graphic, often combining both text and pictorial design elements, usually placed at the entry to a gallery to attract attention and to announce the title of the exhibition

traffic flow refers to the movement of people through a specified area, usually a gallery

two-by-four a USA standard for pre-cut wood which actually measures about 1¾ in. (4.45 cm) by 3¾ in. (9.52 cm)

UBC (universal building code): a standardized set of specifications used as requirements for materials and the design of buildings in the USA

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNESCO Convention this Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property aims to provide a process among nations for regulating international trade in cultural property

UV light (ultraviolet light): the part of the electromagnetic spectrum immediately above the visible range; black light

VALS (Values and Lifestyles Segments): a generalized socio-economic structure by Arnold Mitchell that helps identify population segments, interests, and motivations by their collective values and lifestyles

vinyl adhesive glue used to adhere wallpapers and vinyl wall coverings to surfaces

vitrine a closed, externally lit piece of exhibit furniture, typically consisting of a base or pedestal with a clear enclosure for displaying objects/ graphics

VLS (visible light spectrum): those frequencies of the electromagnetic spectrum to which the human eye is visually sensitive; radiation that is perceived as light

wayfinder any visual, tactile, or auditory clues or devices that assist visitors in orienting themselves within a museum's facilities and surroundings, inform the audience of their options, and help them locate destinations

wet mount the process of attaching a photograph or other flat object to a surface using water-based adhesives

world view an individual's rational model of reality; one's mental picture of the world consisting of facts, raw perceptual data, concepts, suppositions, theories, and generalizations