

Australian Museum Stories Evaluation

Lynda Kelly, Australian Museum

Jerry Watkins, QUT

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Objective



- The objective of this exploratory study was to provide feedback from potential audiences about the Australian Museum Stories project

- **Four focus groups:**
 - Parents with children aged under 5, recent AM visitors
 - Parents with children aged 5-16 years, recent AM visitors
 - Adults aged 50+, participate in cultural activities around Sydney
 - Science teachers, mix of primary and secondary and gender, not recent visitors to AM
- **Limitations:**
 - Shown on a Smartboard (large screen)
 - Shown all at once (with breaks!)

The “look”



- Overall, it was felt that stories were too static, “slide show” like:
 - Need more movement
 - When interviewing a person show the talking head
 - Better use of ambient sound

The “look”



- Participants expected high production values:
 - That’s what they are used to
 - but appreciated some stories can be more “home-movie” like
- Need more “polish”
 - Better and more varied images
 - Don’t dwell on / repeat an image

- Use professional voice where relevant:
 - Such as a scientist q&a with a journalist
- Make better use of children's voices where relevant:
 - Adds variety and authenticity
- If using a staff voice:
 - Slow down!!
 - Locate the voice within the story
 - narrator's image or talking head

- “Technical” voice:
 - [e.g. *Biodiversity mapping*; *Collected stories*]
 - Adds to their understanding that Museum has a wide range of audiences
- Indigenous voice:
 - If using an Indigenous person make sure it’s made very clear
 - Use Elders as far as possible where relevant

More, more, more!!



- They loved all the stories and wanted more
- For example, in *Tall Story*:
 - Who were the people in the pub?
 - More emphasis on the finders not the Museum
 - What is a *diprotodon*?
 - What does it look like?
 - Where is it now?
 - Where can I see one?
 - Why is it not at the Museum?
 - Interviews with scientists now
 - Make story more contemporary

Tell one story



- Focus on “Mysteries of the Museum”
 - Interested in behind-the-scenes:
 - objects we don’t know about AND
 - scientists in the field
- Beasts from Below:
 - What is it really about?
 - the fish or the expedition? BUT
 - They wanted more of both anyway!

Where would stories be shown?

- Usual places nominated:
 - Exhibitions, website
- Along with ...
 - YouTube
 - Television slots like Creature Feature (ABS Kids), community TV
 - Info booths at shopping centres, Darling Harbour, airplanes, visitor centres
 - Classrooms, careers fairs
 - iPods / MP3 players: mobile fieldguides

“Advertorial” stories



- Need “professional” polish
- More images of people’s faces and of visitors
- More moving images
- More passion both in voice and treatment

Final words ...



*Overall we liked the ideas behind Australian Museum Stories and can see many opportunities for using these stories as both learning and promotional tools. While we recognise that this was a pilot project, we strongly believe that the stories need more **polish**, **passion** and **purpose** for public viewing.*

Sometimes we felt the voices were not quite right for the story. Why don't you consider using a professional voice in stories where there's an obvious q&a? Yet, we do recognise that sometimes a Museum staff voice will add credibility, as long as we can see the narrator.

We really need to be shown the context of an object – how large is it? Is it unique or one of many? We think the Museum has heaps of objects and we expect to see plenty of them, not just zooming in and out of a few!

We imagine seeing these stories in a variety of formats, such as in Museum exhibitions, on television and even as adverts for the Museum in odd places like the back of an airplane seat when jetting in to Sydney.

We felt that some of the stories look dated. While we were delighted to learn the long history of the Museum and loved the historical images, we don't want too many! We also expect the Museum to project a contemporary image.

We really loved the idea of getting behind-the-scenes of the Museum. Who'd have thought that marine biologists worked there? It's so interesting to find out how the Museum puts an exhibition together. We want more, more, more!