

GOPRO GALLERY PATROL

The Great North Museum: Hancock is part of Newcastle University and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. With galleries featuring natural sciences, ethnography and archaeology collections, the museum is often described as ‘the world under one roof’. Our dedicated early years space the Mouse House is supported by an associated programme of under 5s activities.

SUMMARY

The museum hired 10 GoPro cameras for the day. We wanted to get an insight into where children were looking, so we were keen to mount the GoPros onto helmets rather than chest mounting. To keep costs low we borrowed children’s helmets from Sustrans, which is a national cycling charity.

Parents filled out a photography permission form which captured their details before taking a camera out. Children were encouraged to take the GoPro on a ‘gallery patrol’ for 15-30 minutes and see what they could find. We provided a selection of different activities that they could choose to engage with if they wanted. These included simple finding tasks in different formats and magnifying glasses. By providing an option to engage with supporting resources we hoped it would give us an insight into how our existing support materials were used, and observe the contrast of a visit without them.



AIMS AND GOALS

For our organisation

Often, visitor feedback comes from an adult's perspective but we wanted to turn the tables and look through the eyes of a toddler. We hoped that our findings would inform how we can support families further in future events and general visits to the museum.

For our audience

We wanted to provide our youngest visitors with the tools to show us their own experience of the museum. The children were to become our documentary film crew, as part of a larger Toddler Takeover event that focused on toddlers doing museum jobs.

OUTCOMES

For our organisation

The event gathered about 12 hours of footage from 45 toddler journeys. It gave us a brilliant insight into how different adult interaction styles can impact on a child's level of engagement, and different ways in which children move through the gallery spaces. We noticed how some children seem to use different objects or areas in the galleries as a base to move away from and return to. Some fabulous conversations were captured where adults used the gallery objects to help children understand more about themselves. The amount of footage captured has certainly given us a lot to think about when looking at ways to support families, but we feel we need more time to properly analyse the footage to be able to support families more appropriately in the future.

For our audience

Parents and carers who took part were delighted for their children to be involved. The length of time that individual groups chose to engage with this activity varied from a few minutes to over an hour. This was largely due to how comfortable individual children felt wearing the helmets. Some adults commented that their children would have been more comfortable wearing chest mounted cameras, or smaller helmets.



LESSONS LEARNT

Our primary focus whilst we are analysing the footage is observing how adult behaviour impacts on a child's engagement in the environment. In response to some of the interactions we observed, we would like to find ways of encouraging and supporting adults in engaging their children in more conversations that draw meaningful connections between museum collections and their own lives.

We would also like to find ways in which we can alter the way that some adults use mobile phones in the museum, to try to change what can be a disruptive element into a more positive way to engage visitors in their museum exploration. It's wonderful to have so much footage, but its sheer volume is taking a very long time to watch and analyse. We feel that investing in one or two cameras to use regularly would be a more manageable way to approach a similar project.

We also found that the helmets were a bit big for some of our littler participants, which could have impacted on their overall experience. Moving forward we will continue to analyse the footage captured from this event, and respond to it by finding new ways to support better engagement within the museum. We have plans to purchase a GoPro camera with a smaller helmet to use regularly and ask volunteer families to help us document their experiences with more targeted research questions.

Some of the footage from this event is now being used to create a short promotional video to advertise our programme to future visitors and funders.

TOP TIP

Start small and build up your footage over time. It will be less daunting to process!

BUDGET

To hire 10 cameras for the day cost £200. We made the decision to use GoPro rather than a cheaper brand as we had researched the quality of footage when moving from bright to dark environments. We felt GoPro would produce the best results for the lighting variations in our museum.

FUNDING

This project was free to take part in for visiting families. It was financed through our Mouse House budget, which is project funded through the Shears Foundation and core funded through Newcastle University. It was also made possible through the generous donation of helmets from the Sustrans charity.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the Great North Museum: Hancock special projects page to learn more about this project and see how some of our footage has been used to create a promotional video.

greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/learning/project-case-studies

This case study was written by Georgina Scott, Assistant Learning Officer at the Great North Museum: Hancock.

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