
WHAT CLICKS? MAJOR FINDINGS

The *What Clicks?* project was a multi-year, multi-faceted effort that included numerous quantitative and qualitative studies that constitute one body of work addressing the audience effectiveness of The Minneapolis Institute of Arts' digital media resources. Each major section of this document reports findings for key elements of the *What Clicks?* study, and, for those who are interested, more detailed findings appear in separate, smaller reports from the various studies (available on artsmia.org). The purpose of this section is to provide a brief overview of the findings from all the studies in one convenient summary. It is hoped that this overview will spark a deeper interest in the details of the many *What Clicks?* inquiries.

The addition of an attract video and keyboards led to a dramatic increase in Museum Directory awareness from 35% in 2002 to 44% in 2003.

Museum Directory Findings

At the beginning of the project, the MIA's electronic Museum Directory consisted of three touchscreens located in the inner lobby of the museum and, after its redesign, a keyboard and mouse for each screen. The Museum Directory's contents include information about special exhibitions, permanent collection galleries, lectures, films, Family Days, tours, membership and amenities, such as restrooms, coat check, and cafes.

The *What Clicks?* pre- and post-surveys and a usability lab provided direction for a major redesign of the Museum Directory. The *What Clicks?* project team increased visibility with an attract video, larger screens and keyboards; modified the program to include more timely information related to the current visit and an "Art Finder" function; and made behind-the-scenes improvements to increase accuracy of the information and reduce staff time to gather and enter it. As of this writing, additional Museum Directories have just been installed on the second and third floors of the museum. Key findings related to the Museum Directory include the following:

Museum Directory Awareness—Many visitors to the museum are unaware of the Museum Directory; however, the addition of an attract video and keyboards led to a dramatic increase in Museum Directory awareness from 35% in 2002 to 44% in 2003. Visitors generally became aware of the Museum Directory because they saw it on a visit, suggesting that if a Museum Directory is to benefit visitors, it has to be prominent and inviting.

Museum Directory Use—About 1 in 5 visitors in both 2002 and 2003 said they used the Museum Directory on any previous museum visit and the primary reason for their use was



a need for information about a specific exhibition or event, or they wanted a general overview of galleries and exhibitions. Repeat use as measured in 2002 was low (41% had used previously) and the primary reason for non-use in both years is that visitors did not see a need or already “knew their way around.” The addition of an “Art Finder” function was a very positive step because 24% of Museum Directory users in 2003 were motivated to use the Museum Directory “to find a specific work of art.” Duration of use increased to 39% of users reporting 5 minutes or more vs. only 15% in 2002; it is likely that more pertinent and timely Museum Directory content in 2003 held their interest for longer periods.

What Clicks? Improvements to the Museum Directory resulted in a dramatic increase in overall satisfaction from 59% of users in 2002 to 77% of users in 2003

Museum Directory Satisfaction—When asked how to improve the Museum Directory, users in 2002 said they wanted information to help them find works of art, more information about current happenings, and additional Directory locations throughout the museum. *What Clicks?* improvements to the Museum Directory resulted in a dramatic increase in overall satisfaction from 59% of users in 2002 to 77% of users in 2003 reporting they were “extremely or very” satisfied. Similarly, more users in 2003 felt the information was “extremely or

very” clear” (86% vs. 73% in 2002) and more users in 2003 said they found what they were looking for (92% vs. 82% in 2002.) In addition, high percentages (87% and 88%) in both years found the Museum Directory “extremely or very” easy to use.

Additional Museum Directory Findings—During the enrichment and redesign phase, museum staff learned that they could create a program that drew from existing databases, thereby eliminating the need for redundant and inconsistent updating. An on-site usability lab, which tested the design and function of the new Museum Directory program, yielded insights for improvement and confirmed that the redesign was on track.

Interactive Learning Station Findings

The MIA installed its first Interactive Learning Stations (ILSs) in 1990 and now maintains a total of seventeen (17) ILSs immediately adjacent to many of the galleries. Each ILS concentrates on a specific area of the museum’s permanent collection and is designed to encourage visitors to connect what they learn from the programs with the actual works of art.

The *What Clicks?* project team used information from pre- and post-visitor surveys, focus groups and

The team’s efforts to increase ILS visibility led to a dramatic increase in visitor awareness from 43% to 53% in 2003.



ILS user statistics to redesign and enhance the ILSs. Because early research revealed low ILS awareness coupled with high user satisfaction, the team focused primarily on physical changes to the ILSs that would increase visibility and promote use. The team's ability to detect statistically measurable differences from one year to the next was limited somewhat by relatively low sample sizes and the team's change in focus from only two ILSs in 2002 to a redesign effort that affected all 17 ILSs. In 2003, the team also tested visitor reaction to small video screens with focused content located in direct proximity to specific works of art.

Interactive Learning Station

Awareness—In the 2002 survey, half the users said the ILSs were “not very visible” or “easy to miss.” The team's efforts to increase ILS visibility led to a dramatic increase in visitor awareness from 43% to 53% in 2003. An evaluation of user statistics for all the ILSs further demonstrated that the more visible the individual ILS, the greater the visitor use. Many ILS users in 2002 (43%) were not aware that other ILSs existed in the museum and efforts to “cross sell” with rack cards placed within every one of the 17 Interactive Learning Stations did not achieve measurable improvement at the time of the follow-up surveys. As with the Museum Directory, the primary source of awareness for ILSs (75% of visitors) is direct observation in the museum.

Interactive Learning Station Use—About a third of museum visitors in both years had used the ILSs on a previous visit.

An overwhelming majority of users (78% in 2002 and 85% in 2003) said they prefer the stations be “located in the gallery close to the art.”

Among ILS users who were surveyed, the majority in both years reported using the ILS for 5 to 14 minutes. Repeat ILS usage appeared to be relatively low in both years, with more than half identifying themselves as first time users. The main reason ILS users were motivated to use them was a desire to “learn more about works of art.” The primary stated reason for not using ILS's among non-users was they “would rather look at art.” [At the time of this writing, the museum's 2003 Visitor Survey (November 2003) did identify an increase in reported ILS use during the current visit (from 9% in 2001 to 28% in 2003).]

Interactive Learning Station

Satisfaction—Due to high ILS satisfaction, the *What Clicks?* team focused primarily on increasing visibility and usability rather than making changes to content. Not surprisingly, there were no 2003 increases in the already high satisfaction measures for overall satisfaction, ease of use, clarity of

information and amount of information learned while using the ILS. Most important, very high percentages of ILS users (76%) in both years said the experience “enhanced their understanding and appreciation of the art very much or quite a bit.””

Additional Interactive Learning Station Findings—An important finding related to the ILSs in both years was that an overwhelming majority of users (78% in 2002 and 85% in 2003) said they prefer the stations be “located in the gallery close to the art.” In addition, a strong majority of ILS users said



they preferred that the information be “tied closely to specific works of art in the gallery.” The percentage of users who preferred only general/background information about art in the gallery declined from 23% in 2002 to 10% in 2003, a statistically significant drop.

Small LCD Video Displays in the Galleries—As a result of these 2002 findings related to location and content of the ILS’s, the *What Clicks?* team added a focus group study during the enrichment and redesign phase to test the use of small video screens with limited content and in direct proximity to works of art. Three groups of diverse respondents were exposed to six different installations of the video monitors and interviewed by a moderator at several points during the 2 1/2 hour visit.

The presence of small video displays in the galleries enhanced the visitor’s understanding and appreciation of the works of art.

The following are among the key conclusions from the focus group study: The presence of small video displays in the galleries enhanced the visitor’s understanding and appreciation of the works of art. All types of visitors, including those who might be considered more “art savvy,”

felt they benefited from the videos. Importantly, the video displays did not *detract* from the visitor’s experience of the works of art; indeed, only a small number of visitors even noticed the video screens upon entering their first gallery. (Initially, visitors did not know that the videos were the focus

of the study.) Most respondents felt that the soft, culturally appropriate music that accompanied some of the videos added significantly to their experience. In some cases, the video displays filled what visitors described as a gap between the more general information provided by museum signs and the labels for specific works of art, creating a mid-level contextual piece that resulted in deeper understanding of the works of art in the room.

Web Site Findings

At the beginning of the study, the museum’s Web site, *artsmia.org*, provided online activities, an event calendar, educational resources, and up-to-the-minute information and previews of current and upcoming exhibitions. The *What Clicks?* team evaluated the *artsmia.org* site with pre- and post-online surveys of Web site visitors, pre- and post-usability lab studies, an analysis of the museum’s Web site statistics and a survey related to Web site terminology conducted among visitors to the museum.

Web site visitors, in contrast to museum visitors, are younger, live further from the museum, and are more likely to be employed.

Based on the 2002 baseline research, which showed relatively high Web site visitor satisfaction and very high repeat visits, the project team’s enrichment and redesign efforts focused on



two primary areas: (1) driving new visitors to the Web site and (2) making site improvements based on the usability lab and Web terminology research.

Web Site Awareness—The *What Clicks?* pre- and post-Technology Awareness surveys revealed that more than half of museum visitors are aware that the museum has a Web site (54% in 2002 and 59% in 2003). Web site awareness in both years was higher among museum members than non-members. The Web site survey revealed that most visitors find the Web site by using a search engine. At the time of this writing, there were no measurable increases in awareness.

Web Site Use—Overall visits to the site based on the MIA's Web statistics showed that visits continued to grow at the historical increase of 50% per year during the *What Clicks?* study. It is unknown whether this growth would have occurred in the absence of the *What Clicks?* improvements to the site

More Web site visitors in 2003 said they searched for information to plan a museum visit (52% vs. 38% in 2002).

and increased marketing. MIA staff knew from the Web statistics that visitors to the site tended to stay on the site for a relatively long period of time (10 to 12 minutes) and this was confirmed by the Web survey in which 54% said they visited for at least 10 minutes.

A major finding in the online surveys is that a very high percentage of visitors are repeat visitors (78% in both 2002 and 2003.) The ever-changing, content-rich site appears to provide ample reason to come back. The survey research afforded the MIA its first opportunity to learn who, specifically, visits the Web site. Among other demographic findings, the team learned that Web site visitors, in contrast to museum visitors, are younger, live further from the museum, and are more likely to be employed.

The 2002 usability lab provided excellent guidance for improving the overall navigability and usability of the site.

Additional findings confirmed the important relationship between visits to the Web site and the museum itself. In 2003, more Web site visitors *had visited* the museum (78% vs. 70% in 2002). In addition, more Web site visitors in 2003 said they searched for information to plan a museum visit (52% vs. 38% in 2002). A Technology Awareness survey of museum visitors revealed that 37% of museum visitors said they had visited the Web site in the past year. One-fourth of Web site visitors are museum members, while one-third of museum visitors are museum members.

Web Site Satisfaction—The 2002 usability lab provided excellent guidance for improving the overall navigability and usability of the site. Examples of changes made during the redesign period included: making it easier to return to the



Home page; clarifying calendar functions; adding gallery locations to specific works of art; improving search functions; and improving the image zoom interface (for examining thousands of permanent collection objects). These and other changes were retested in the 2003 usability lab and in a terminology survey among museum visitors.

The online Web surveys indicated that overall satisfaction among Web site visitors was high in both years with a majority reporting they were “extremely or very” satisfied. (The

Terminology familiar to museum staff may not be clear and meaningful to the Web site visitor.

increase to 65% in 2003 from 62% in 2002 did not meet tests of statistical significance.) There was an increase in the percentage of visitors who said they found the information on the site “extremely” current (29% vs. 24% in 2002). Reassuring to the team was the fact that both the 2002 and 2003 surveys revealed that most (80%) of the Web site visitors found what they were looking for. (An additional 10% said they were not looking for anything in particular.)

A new survey question in 2003 helped the museum prioritize new ways in which Web site visitors would like to interact with the site: 44% would like to buy tickets to exhibitions and events; 31% want to buy museum shop merchandise; 30% want to sign up for email news and reminders; and 25% want to register for classes. (Online shopping and membership purchase were made available on the site just after the follow-

With its Web site, the museum is able to extend the reach of its rich collection into the homes of many more people.

up research was conducted, and the relative success of online membership purchases and renewals has been a surprise to MIA staff.)

General Web Site Findings—A key finding of both the usability lab and the Web Site Terminology survey was that terminology familiar to museum staff may not be clear and meaningful to the Web site visitor. For example, terms such as “interactive media” and “online programs” are part of the internal language of MIA staff, referring to collection-based online thematic programs (e.g., *Modernism*, *Arts of Asia*), but they were sometimes confusing for Web site visitors. Although a large percentage of Web visitation is going to these very programs that appear to be ineffectively named in the menu, improved terms would likely increase visitation.

The general picture that emerged from the research is that with its Web site, the museum is able to extend the reach of its rich collection into the homes of many more people than those directly served within the walls of the museum, and to reach multiple audiences with related program content.

Marketing Findings

When the 2002 baseline surveys indicated that satisfaction is relatively high for all the MIA’s technologies and that awareness is relatively low, the *What Clicks?* project team



turned its attention to marketing. What could be done to increase awareness, and ultimately use, for all the technologies? Numerous marketing strategies and tactics were developed and implemented including: new or revised print

What Clicks? efforts to test online advertising failed to demonstrate that it is an effective way to drive museum attendance.

and collateral materials, television and radio advertising, online advertising, a public relations campaign and training of staff to encourage visitor use of available resources.

Marketing Findings for In-Museum Technologies—Despite the stepped up marketing for the Museum Directory and Interactive Learning Stations, the overwhelming driver of awareness continues to be direct observation while on a museum visit. There was a small but significant increase in users who became aware of the ILSs through Institute mailings and publications. Eight out of 10 Museum Directory users in both pre- and post-surveys became aware of it on a museum visit. This finding does not suggest, however, that marketing of in-museum technology is ill advised. Rather, because most of this advertising is “free” in the sense that the museum’s communications would occur in any event, it is only a matter of including references to museum technologies.

Marketing Findings for the Web site—The web marketing part of the *What Clicks?* study was particularly informative because MIA staff had had little experience with Web marketing prior to the project. Using a test-retest approach,

MIA marketing staff learned that on the Web, targeted messages to targeted audiences delivered the greatest results. For example, local media sites, such as the local newspaper’s, delivered higher click-throughs than less targeted national sites. Similarly, the highest coupon redemption from all online advertising came from direct, personalized e-mail messages to self-selected e-mail group lists. Designing an ad for online advertising is similar to creating ads for other advertising media in that larger, eye-catching ads with compelling messages do best. On the other hand, MIA staff learned to limit the amount of animation in an ad because some viewers may be annoyed, and it may take up too much file space to be practical. *What Clicks?* efforts to test online advertising failed to demonstrate that it is an effective way to drive museum attendance.

More in-depth information related to all the *What Clicks?* findings can be found in the individual sections of this report related to the specific technologies and the *What Clicks?* marketing program.

What Clicked?

Many of the *What Clicks?* initiatives ultimately “clicked in terms of yielding specific, tangible benefits to the museum. Following is a short list of a few of the *What Clicks?* successes.

Museum Directory

Redesigned Museum Directory increased visibility and awareness



New “Art Finder” function was used by 24%
More relevant, timely content increased satisfaction and duration of use
A common database saved staff time and reduced errors
Museum staff who work most closely with visitors knew what visitors needed

Interactive Learning Stations

ILSs needed to be visible and inviting to attract users
Redesign of 17 ILSs increased visibility
ILSs enhance understanding and appreciation of the art
Small, focused-content video displays were a big hit with focus groups

Web Site

Online survey proved that Web site enables museum to reach different audience
Usability labs guided numerous refinements of the site
Web site terminology survey led to language that is clearer for the visitor
More visitors found the information “extremely current”
Visits to the site continue to grow by 50% per year
More Web site visitors used the site to plan a museum visit

Marketing

Direct observation (vs. marketing) is primary driver of Museum Directory and ILS awareness
Targeted media generated highest click-through rates
Personalized e-mail messages to self-selected e-mail group lists really click

