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## WHAT CLICKS? WEB SITE

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### Background

When the *What Clicks?* project began, the museum's Web site, *artsmia.org*, (established in 1994) provided online activities, an event calendar, educational resources, and up-to-the-minute information and previews of current and upcoming exhibitions. A second Web site, *ArtsConnectEd*, was created as a joint venture with the Walker Art Center in 1997 to provide public access primarily to K–12 teachers and students to the rich collections, documentation, archives, media, and curricula of both The Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Walker Art Center. However, *What Clicks?* did *not* measure awareness of, use of, or satisfaction with *artsconnected.org*, nor were any enrichment and redesign changes made to the site as part of this research project. The Institute's comprehensive, content-rich Web site, *artsmia.org* (inclusive of *artsconnected.org*) logged roughly 3.85 million visits in FY 03 and, for several years, online visitation has grown consistently at a rate of 50% per year. This growth is consistent with rates reported by two large, comprehensive art museums, one each in the U.S and the U.K. One of these museums uses a method to correct for "non-human" visitation (e.g., robots, spiders) to arrive at a number comparable to the MIA's (between 30% and 50%).

### Evaluation Approach

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, a thorough and ongoing analysis of the museum's Web site statistics and a survey related to Web site terminology conducted among visitors to the museum.

**Online Web Survey**—The *What Clicks?* project team designed and implemented an online Web survey to measure awareness, use, and satisfaction regarding the Web site itself, and to collect demographic information, similar to the in-museum survey. Between August 28 and September 11, 2002, a pop-up survey appeared upon entering the *artsmia.org* Web site. The pop-up window, designed to graphically complement the site aesthetic, contained text that invited visitors to participate in a survey by providing an e-mail address. Those who complied received an e-mail invitation to complete the online survey. It was essential that visitors fill out the survey at the end of their online visit. If visitors initially declined, a second window popped under their main browser window with the idea that visitors would eventually see it upon exiting their browser. The pop-under again invited participation through e-mail, but also



offered the option of completing the survey immediately. A chance for a \$500 gift certificate to Amazon.com was offered as an incentive. A total of 573 people completed the survey in 2002 and 561 did so in 2003. Considering that there were 41,284 unique visitors to the site in 2002 and 84,450 in 2003, the response rates were 1.39% and 0.67% respectively. (A more detailed description of the Online Web Survey appears in the Methodology section of the appendix to this report.)

**Usability Lab Study**—The Institute was fortunate to partner with Minneapolis-based Target Corporation to conduct a Usability Lab Study in both 2002 and 2003. While the *What Clicks?* project team brought questions, ideas, and desired outcomes to Target, it was Target’s well-developed process, their ability to accommodate a noncommercial client, and their newly reinstalled facilities, that made this study work.

Target employees and the *What Clicks?* team conducted three days of testing with a total of eight subjects, including: museum visitors and non-visitors, museum members and non-members, and people with varying degrees of interest in art. Individuals



Members of the Interactive Media Group observe test subjects using [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org) from behind a one-way mirror at Target Corporation's Minneapolis Usability Lab facilities.

with Web design experience were excluded from participation. Participants were given a monetary incentive of \$50 for their participation. As described more fully in the Methodology section of this report, the evaluator positioned each subject one by one at a monitored computer and asked the individuals to perform a number of tasks, including finding the MIA’s Web site. They were asked to imagine themselves in a number of scenarios, such as planning a museum visit, learning about a certain type of art, etc. MIA staff observed the sessions behind one-way glass and recorded their observations. The group held a debriefing session following each user session and created a list of findings, which became an important guide for enrichment and redesign work.

**Web Statistics Evaluation**—MIA staff have tracked user statistics for all the museum’s technologies for many years, and the *What Clicks?* project provided an opportunity to incorporate these data into the overall analysis. MIA staff have kept a weekly tally of visits to its two Web sites since March of 2000. The tally tracks the number of user sessions logged on the Web servers, generated by a commercially available software, (WEBTRENDS) analyzed and reported by MIA staff. Other information recorded includes session duration, country of access (where known), Internet Service Provider, etc.

**Survey of Web Terminology**—An additional research component was added during the enrichment and redesign phase for the purpose of testing new terminology for the Web site. Museum staff intercepted 160 visitors to the museum and asked them to complete a short self-administered survey. One part of the survey included multiple choice questions designed



to determine what terms are best understood by a Web site visitor, e.g., “In what section would you expect to be able to view works of art online?” Another section presented five short-answer questions that asked them to describe what they would expect to be able to do in a Web site section with a specific label. Study participants received a small gift as thanks for completing the survey.

## What We Learned from the 2002 Online Visitor Survey

The initial Web site survey provided the museum with its first opportunity to learn who, specifically, is visiting the museum’s Web site. Respondents were also asked a range of questions related to awareness, usage, and satisfaction with their Web site visit. The in-museum visitor surveys provided additional data related to Web site awareness.

Following are key findings in the 2002 Survey:

### *Findings Related to Web Site Awareness (from the In-Museum Technology Awareness Surveys*

- Museum visitors had higher awareness of the museum’s Web site (54%) than of the Museum Directory (35%) or Interactive Learning Stations (43%).
- Museum members were more aware of the Web site (63%) than non-members (49%).
- Visitors to the Web site were most likely to find it by using a search engine (39%).

### *Web Site Findings Related to Use*

- Repeat visitation to the Web site was very high; 78% said they had visited previously.
- Compared with museum visitors, Web site visitors were younger, reside further from the museum and were more likely to be employed.

	Web Site Visitors*	Museum Visitors**
Younger people (under 45 years)	66%	41%
People who reside outside the Twin Cities 7-County metro area	46%	26%
People who are employed	74%	59%
People who are not museum members	76%	67%

\* 2002 MIA Web Site Survey

\*\*2002 Technology Awareness Survey

- Most Web site visitors (70%) had visited the museum at some point.
- Among museum visitors who were aware of the Web site (54% of museum visitors), a total of 69% had visited the Web site in the past year. (Thus, 37% of museum visitors have visited the Web site in the past year.)



- One-fourth of Web site visitors are museum members, while one-third of museum visitors are members.
- Top motivators for visiting the Web site were: to find specific information about the museum, to plan a trip to the museum, and to learn about art for personal enrichment, in that order.

Motivation for Visit	% Web Site Visitors
To find specific information about the museum	34%
I'm planning a trip to the museum	19%
To learn about art for personal enrichment	18%
Just browsing	17%
To learn about art for a class assignment	8%
To look for employment opportunities	4%

Source: 2002 MIA Web Site Survey

- Similar to the motivation for the visit, the largest number of Web site visitors said they learned about exhibitions and searched for information to plan a museum visit.

#### What did you do on your visit to The Minneapolis Institute of Arts' Web site?

Activity	% Web Site Visitors
Learned about current and upcoming exhibitions	55%
Searched for information to plan a museum visit	38%
Learned more about art for personal enjoyment	34%
Just browsed	28%
Learned about special events or classes	24%
Found out about job opportunities	14%
Conducted research for a class assignment	9%
Learned about art activities for children	8%
Used the Web site's interactive programs	8%
Other	8%
Received information about museum membership	6%
Found out about school group tours and other educational resources	4%

Source: 2002 MIA Web Site Survey

- Web site visitors reported fairly long visits: 54% said they visited for at least 10 minutes; 82% for at least 5 minutes. (Web statistics show an average of 10-12 minutes.)



### Web Site Findings Related to Satisfaction

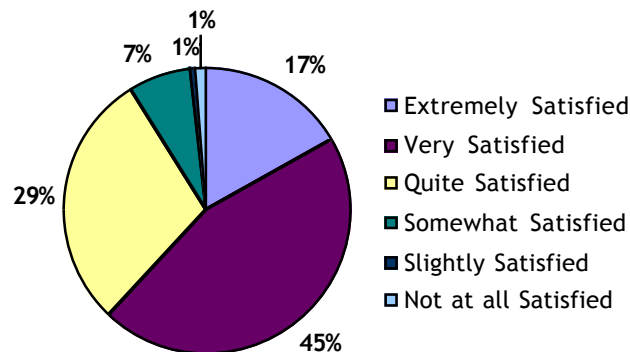
- Satisfaction with the Web site was high as measured on several variables.

#### 2002 Findings on Web Site Satisfaction

Overall “extremely” or “very” satisfied	62%
“Extremely” or “very” easy to easy to move around and know what to click on next	70%
Information is “extremely” or “very” current	75%
Learned “a great deal” or “quite a lot”	93%

- In addition to the 62% who said they were “extremely” or “very” satisfied, another 29% said they were “quite satisfied.”

#### Overall Satisfaction with the Web Site



Source: 2002 Web Site Survey

- Most visitors (80%) reported that they found what they were looking for on the site and another 10% said they were not looking for anything in particular, which means only 10% had difficulty finding something.
- Top ideas for improving the site included more works of art on the site and more information about works of art currently on view in the museum and on the site

### What We Learned from the 2002 Usability Lab

In addition to detecting countless small ways that usability of the Web site could be enhanced, the *What Clicks?* team came to the following more general conclusions from the three days of usability lab:

- Users were generally surprised and very pleased with the depth and breadth of the art information on the site
- Many said their online experience reawakened their interest in visiting the museum itself
- Web site visitors experienced a number of navigational challenges or points of confusion:
  - Relationship between, and content in, the Visit and General Information sections
  - Navigation back to the Home Page
  - Understanding the calendar function
  - Use of the image zooming controls
  - Relationship between the Collection, online multimedia programs and *ArtsConnectEd*



## What We Learned from the Survey of Web Terminology

The following key conclusions were drawn from the Web Terminology survey results, interpreted by MIA staff:

- Current Web site terminology is largely successful. Since most content is accessible through a variety of means, visitors are likely to find what they are looking for, even if their first destination isn't the main repository for that information.
- More cross-links between sections may be helpful. Current cross-links work well, and it is advisable to develop more as a way to ensure that visitors get to their destination on the site as quickly as possible.
- The term "Calendar" appears to be a better label than "Events." In several questions, survey participants preferred "calendar" over "events." No subjects in the subsequent directory usability lab had difficulty after MIA staff converted from the "events" term.
- "Interactive media" is an unsatisfactory label for resources such as *Modernism* and *Arts of Asia*—two examples of online programs or "subsites." While this terminology is traditional among museum staff, it was confusing to the visitor.
- Users thought "Online Resources" would be links to other sites outside *artsmia.org*.

## What We Did to Enhance the Web Site

During the enrichment and redesign phase, the *What Clicks?* project team focused on two key areas:

- Driving people to the Web site; and
- Making site improvements based on usability lab and Web terminology research

As with the in-museum technologies, the 2002 research demonstrated that satisfaction with the museum's Web site was high. In addition, repeat visitation was very high, with 78% of Web site visitors indicating they had visited the site previously. Historically, MIA staff had focused on creating the best, most comprehensive Web site they could, and visits to the site had continued to increase at a hefty rate of about 50% per year for several years as measured by its Web statistics. MIA staff believed this growth was largely attributable to the museum's commitment to growing the site by adding new components/resources and keeping the site's content fresh, thereby providing people with added incentives to visit the site. Among the changes to the Web site was the addition of the museum's teachers' newsletter, *Teaching the Arts*, previously a biannual publication that is now available monthly online.

Given the growth rate and focus on content, it is not surprising that in the past little attention had been given to the task of





marketing the site. Realizing from the survey that they had an excellent Web site, MIA staff turned their attention to the challenge of attracting more people to its site. The *What Clicks?* project gave MIA staff an opportunity to try a number of marketing tactics and assess their effectiveness. (These are summarized in greater detail in the Marketing section of this report.)

A second major focus of *What Clicks?* was site improvements based on pre- and post-usability lab studies. As described above, the 2002 usability lab provided countless suggestions for improving the site from a user point of view. Examples of changes include:

- Made it easier for visitors to return to the Home page
- Clarified some event calendar functions
- Improved image zoom interface
- Reworked search function to include a thesaurus
- Added gallery locations to specific works of art (or noted “not on view”)
- Changed name of “Visit” section to “Calendar”

There were two limitations to the work of the *What Clicks?* Web site team. First, concurrently with the timing of the redesign effort, the museum was launching a major new branding initiative that will give all aspects of the museum a new look. The team realized that investing in major design changes at this time would not have been a good use of resources, given the more significant overhaul anticipated in the year following the *What Clicks?* project. Secondly, the team rejected a number of ideas for creating dynamic new content, such as featuring acquisitions and spotlights on

specific objects, because of concerns about future maintenance costs. These types of changes would encourage repeat visits to the site but many would have required substantial staff resources to maintain them. The team felt that the benefits of some of these efforts were not substantial enough to justify the ongoing commitment of additional resources.

## Results of the *What Clicks?* Effort

### *Results of the 2003 Web Survey*

Overall satisfaction with the site continued to remain high (65% “extremely/very” in 2003 vs. 62% in 2002) however the increase was not statistically significant. There was a notable increase in the percentage of visitors who said they found the information “extremely current” (29% vs. 24% in 2002).

#### How current was the information you found on the Web site?

	2002	2003	Difference
Extremely current	24%	29%	+5%
Very current	51%	51%	0%
Quite current	23%	19%	-4%
Somewhat outdated	2%	1%	-1%
Slightly outdated	0%	0%	0%
Not at all current	0%	0%	0%

Source: 2002 and 2003 MIA Web Site Surveys



The 2002 baseline surveys demonstrated an important relationship between the Web site and the museum, with strong overlap of visitation to both, and the 2003 Web site survey suggested an even stronger relationship than in 2002, perhaps as a result of the team's marketing efforts. More Web site visitors in 2003 had visited the museum (78% vs. 70% in 2002.)

**When is the last time, if ever, that you visited The Minneapolis Institute of Arts museum?**

	2002	2003	Difference
Within the last 3 months	36%	42%	+6%
3 to 6 months ago	12%	16%	+4%
6 months to 1 year ago	9%	9%	0%
1 to 5 years ago	9%	7%	-2%
More than 5 years ago	4%	4%	0%
Never	31%	22%	-9%

Source: 2002 and 2003 MIA Web Site Surveys

A very large percentage of Web site visitors in 2003 (69%) reported that they were motivated to visit because they were looking for specific museum information or planning a visit. (While these numbers are up dramatically from the 2002 baseline survey, statistical tests are not valid because changes were made to the list of options for this question.) Direct comparisons *are* valid for the question which asked what they did on their visit to the Web site. Many more Web site visitors

in 2003 said they searched for information to plan a museum visit.

**What did you do on your visit to The Minneapolis Institute of Arts Web site?**  
(Check all that apply)

	2002	2003	Difference
Learned about current and upcoming exhibitions	55%	58%	+3%
Searched for information to plan a museum visit	38%	52%	+14%
Learned more about art for enrichment	34%	33%	-1%
Just browsed	28%	32%	+4%
Learned about special events or classes	24%	18%	-6%
Found out about job opportunities	14%	12%	-2%

Source: 2002 and 2003 MIA Web Site Surveys

When asked what could be done to improve or enhance the Web site, the largest percentage requested that more works of art be added to the site; however, this percentage was down somewhat from 2002 (32% vs. 38% in 2002) and the percentage who requested online activities for children and families increased significantly (10% vs. 7% in 2002.)





Responses to a new question in 2003 will provide ongoing direction for MIA staff: visitors were asked “Which of the following would you like to do when you visit the Museum’s Web site?” Responses clearly indicate how Web site visitors would like to interact with the site.

**Which of the following would you like to do when you visit the Museum’s Web site?**

Buy tickets for special exhibitions or events	44%
Buy museum shop merchandise	31%
Sign up for email news and reminders	30%
Register for classes	25%
Purchase or renew museum membership	20%
RSVP to invitations	17%
Make a donation to the museum	10%
Other	12%

Source: 2003 MIA Web Site Survey

In a new and related question in the Visitor Survey (November 2003), many museum visitors indicated they would most like to receive e-mail notices about upcoming exhibitions.

Information on upcoming events	40%
General newsletter	23%
Special offers and discounts	22%
Specific updates on certain programs (family activities, lectures etc.	22%
Museum shop specials	13%
No e-mail interest	48%

The project team also learned that the percentage of Web site visitors who report using a high speed Internet connection increased dramatically in 2003.

**What speed of Internet connection do you most often use to “surf” the Internet**

	2002	2003	Difference
High speed connection such as DSL, cable, ISDN, TI	57%	70%	+13%
Dial up modem of 56K or less	43%	30%	-13%

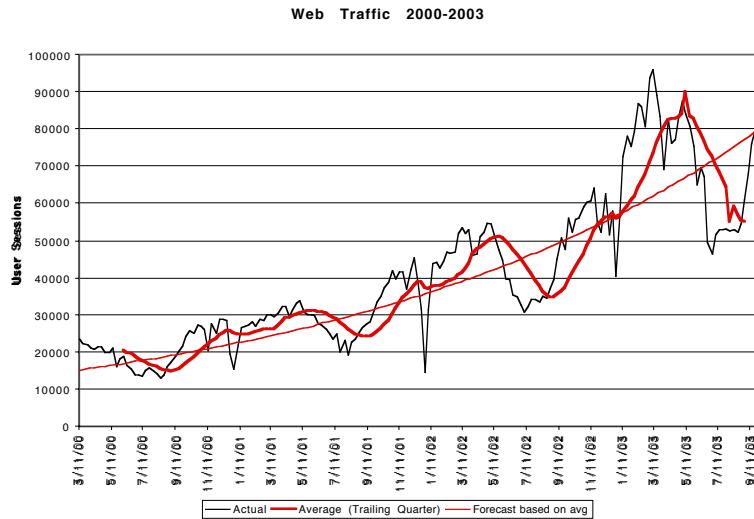
Source: 2002 and 2003 MIA Web Site Surveys

**Web statistics**

One of the challenges of evaluating the museum’s Web site is that it has always been somewhat of a “moving target.” The Web site is not static: change is the norm. Thus, some of the changes made to the site during the *What Clicks?* study, such as offering online shopping and membership purchases and renewals, would have been made anyway, in the normal course of continuously updating the site. Similarly, as of this writing, the Web statistics data suggest that visits to the Web site grew at about 50%, the rate expected based on past experience. There is no way to know what the rate of growth would have been without the *What Clicks?* project. Perhaps the *What Clicks?* efforts did drive incremental growth, but there is no way to know for sure. Although the 2003 Web survey suggested that the percentage of visitors reporting that they visited the site for 20 minutes or more increased, no increase was reflected in the Web statistics. MIA staff believe that the self-reported survey data is less reliable and have concluded



that duration of visit has not increased. It appears that the MIA's growth rate is comparable to other, similar museums based on an informal survey among other museums; however,



no central data source for Web statistics exists.

Source: MIA Web Statistics

The in-depth analysis of *What Clicks?* demonstrated to MIA staff that, in addition to tracking the overall number of visits to the site, the Web statistics are a valuable source of other types of information to guide decisions. The following data are reported to museum staff on a weekly basis:

- User sessions
- Percentage of visitors who are international
- Average session length
- First time visit vs. repeat visit
- Average sessions per day
- Most active and least active days

For example, an ongoing analysis of the “Top 10” entry pages reveals the sections of the site that receive the most visits in any given week. In monitoring the trends, MIA staff have observed that nearly half of Web visitation is going to programs that are collection based, e.g., *World Myths*, *Arts of Asia*, *Modernism*, *Unified Vision*.) It is important to point out that many of these programs are also available within the museum through the Interactive Learning Stations. (In-museum users statistics are NOT counted as Web site visits.) Thus, the museum is able to extend the reach of its rich collection into the homes of many more people than those who are directly served within the walls of the museum. *Arts of Asia* is an excellent example because this program is available both on the Web site and as an Interactive Learning Station in the museum. The number of visits to this Interactive Learning Station each year is estimated at less than 5,000 while annual visits to *Arts of Asia* on the Web site total approximately 343,000. Clearly, the museum's Web site goes a long way toward fulfilling the MIA's mission of connecting art and people.

## Future Directions for the Web Site

On the whole, the *What Clicks?* project demonstrates that the museum's Web site has enormous potential to broaden and deepen the museum's relationship with its visitors and serve people who do not or cannot visit in person. MIA staff will continue to refine the site through ongoing usability lab studies. Similarly, MIA staff will continue to address the issue of terminology, attempting to find terminology that is both accurate for the museum setting and understandable and clear to the general public. As the museum continues to build its



collection, additional content will become available for this already content rich site. In addition, MIA staff will build on the learning that has occurred through *What Clicks?* by creating an Internet Vision Project team to further define the Web site's role and fully realize its potential.

