



Technology & the Visitor

Presentation to 2007 National Scenic Byways
Conference

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Guide By Cell

Look. Listen. Learn.



Guide by Cell
Audio tours



Today's Discussion

Use off-the-shelf technology to improve the visitor experience

Special focus on:

- Cell phones
- Podcasts



Technology and visitor experience



- Technologies improve visitor experience*
 - 63% of visitors who had never used tourism technology, after trying, said they would seek it out during future visits
 - Not one technology function for everyone – people learn and engage differently
- Engagement key – get excited about visit

*"Visitor response to a multi-track interpretive approach": Paper presented April 14, 2007 by Peter Samis of SF MOMA at Museums and the Web Conference

What do visitors want?

Visitors want –

- A little bit of interesting information
- Where they are located
- From real people

As long as it's –

- Simple
- Cheap
- Fun



What are your goals?

- Educate/interpret
- Make experience more memorable, fun, entertaining
- Visitors return again and tell friends
- Capture statistics and feedback
- Press
- Not too expensive to start and maintain



How important is audio?

- Educate and inform
- Visitor experience enhanced
- Creates personal relationship



Audio issues

- Often impractical because of walking or driving tours, or out of way locations
- Player damage or theft
- Staff required to check-in/out
- Updates challenging
- Hygiene concerns
- Real-time statistics difficult



Trend towards user provided devices

**Tourism
Provided**



Cassette player



CD Player



Digital audio player



**User
Provided**



Everything!



Phone/Web



Cell Phone



iPod



It's not just a phone



And coming soon.....



Cell phones and podcasting – technologies merging

Apple's new iPhone sets new bar



Technology # 1: Cell phones -- Why so much interest?



- Inexpensive for organization & visitor
- No device handling & never run out
- Technology advances -- try easily
 - Hosted firms like Guide by Cell
 - Reception improvements
- Most people carry cell phone
- Multiple languages
- 100 + tours

Cell phones will play greater future role

- Cost -- flat monthly rate
- Coverage — anywhere in world
- Functionality “super-charged”
 - Phone calls, text messages, cell phone audio tours
 - Music via Apple’s iPhone
 - Download museum map
 - Use GPS to navigate and way-find
 - Watch videos
 - Download photos (sell images \$)
 - Connect to tourist web sites
 - Auto download podcasts



Check real-time data



Statistics Report OVERVIEW for (408) 795-2160

Time Period:

From: September 15 2005 **To:** March 13 2006 **Total:** 180 days

Prompt #	Name	Photo	# Times Requested	Listen	Status
1	Best and Campo		194		Live
2	Dinh Q. Lee		148		Live
100	Dan Keegan		136		Live
7	Judith Baca		119		Live
5	Travis Somerville		110		Live
6	Hung Liu		109		Live
4	Robert Ameson		104		Live
3	Wally Hedrick		93		Live
8	Tina Rodriguez				

Inbound calls per day
 # Unique visitors per day
 # Unique visitors per day
 # Prompts heard
 # of Distinct Prompts Listened To
 # Prompts heard per day
 Average # prompts heard per call
 # Inbound calls per unique visitor
 Total # minutes used

Statistics Report OVERVIEW for (408) 795-2160

Time Period:

15 2005 **To:** March 13 2006 **Total:** 180 days

	Tour #1	Total
	820	820
	4.6	4.6
	256	256
	1.4	1.4
	1711	1711
	37	37
	9.5	9.5
	2.1	2.1
	3.2	3.2



Location of visitors



Technology # 2: Podcasting – What is it?

- Digital audio files
- Available on the web
- For playback
 - On a computer
 - On an MP3 player, like an iPod



Podcasting—why so much interest?

- Tourist sites use audio to interpret and entice
- Inexpensive to produce and publish
- Change content easily
- Push content through RSS to subscribers
- Sell content via iTunes Store



How large is travel/tourism podcasting market?

- 100 million iPods have been sold
 - Doesn't include other MP3 players
- Hundreds of podcasts available
 - www.museumpods.com



Visitor benefits with cell phones and podcasting

- More educational & enjoyable visit
- Familiarity with device
- No check-in and probably lower cost
- No hygiene issues
- Available 24/7



Challenges

- Visitor
 - Did not bring device
 - Getting visitor to try the technology
 - Unaware service is available
 - Social norm – acceptable to use?
- Tourism organization
 - Which technology to launch
 - Content creation takes time
 - Provide some devices for rental?
 - Costs \$
 - Sponsorship



Guide by Cell is a technology platform

- Provide applications to 100 + institutions
- Applications
 - Build
 - Host
- Store content
- Real-time web interface and data
- Process call or text message



Specific example: cell phone application



- We provide 3 things
 - Visitor call-in number
 - Organization prompt recording number
 - Web access and data storage
 - Upload/download audio files
 - Statistics
 - Management tools

Heritage Walk Demo Tour

Katie Callahan
Trails and Byways Manager

Baltimore City Heritage Area



Baltimore Heritage Walking Tour

- What to interpret?
- How tell people about tour?



Why cell phones



- Easy, relatively inexpensive way to get started with audio tours
- Flexibility
- In-house production and control
- Easy web-based administration

Administration

- Administration
 - Set up logins and passwords for people recording tour
 - Assign prompts to be recorded



Marketing – signs and handouts



*Learn about the
history on this corner*

2#

For a guided phone tour dial:

(408) 795-2177

Statistics and feedback

- Which prompts are most popular?
- How many people are listening?
- Capture feedback to improve tour



Tourism implications

- Multiple ways to engage visitor
- Engaging increases satisfaction
- Technology is ready and inexpensive
- Visitor feedback and demographic information



For more information

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