

Frequently asked questions

Are we trying hard enough? Making museums and historic houses relevant to audiences in the twenty- first century

14-18 October 2017, Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace, London UK

Relevance2017@hrp.org.uk



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What is the conference about?

We are inspired by Nina Simon's recent book [The Art of Relevance](#) and want to explore ways in which museums and heritage sites can connect to visitors and audiences through learning and interpretation.

There are three themes of the conference and all papers, workshops and discussions will relate to these, which are

- Heritage and communities
- Learning in the heritage environment
- Innovation and learning

See the [Call for Papers](#) on the website for further details

Where will the conference be held?

The conference will take place in London, from the 14-18 October 2017

14-15th October: Tower of London

16th October: Hampton Court Palace

17th October: Excursions in London to see local museums and heritage sites (included in the conference fee). Excursions will leave from the Tower of London.

18th October: Optional day of excursions in the south east of England to museum and heritage (this will not be included in the conference fee. There will be an additional charge). Excursions will leave from the Tower of London.

Delegates should stay near the Tower of London. A list of hotels and special hotel deals will be available when booking opens in April/May 2017.

There will be transport from the Tower of London to other conference venues included in the conference timetable and conference fee.

Find out more about the [Tower of London](#) and [Hampton Court Palace](#)

Excursions will be announced in 2017, watch our [website](#) or #relevance2017 for further details

Where should I book my accommodation?

Delegates should book a hotel or accommodation near the Tower of London. Coaches will be provided for travel to all other sites.

A list of hotels and special hotel deals will be available when booking opens in April/May 2017.

What is the word limit for the proposal?

To submit a proposal you will need to give this information:

- Please give a short biography (this will appear in the conference programme, max 200 words)
- Title for your paper
- Provide a short abstract for your proposed paper (max 200 words)
- A brief explanation of how your paper relates to the conference theme: Are we doing enough (max 100 words)?
- What sub-theme does your abstract apply to? Tick all that apply
 - Heritage and Communities
 - Learning in the Heritage Environment
 - Innovation and Learning
 - Heritage and Education (main conference theme)
- Please provide key learning points of what attendees will learn from your presentation (one or two sentences)
- What is your preferred format for presenting?
 - Research Paper
 - Lightning or Express Talk (7-minute paper and 15-minute audience Q&A)



- Part of a theme panel (including a 5-minute presentation of ideas, 40-minute panel discussion and 15-minute audience Q&A)
- 75-minute facilitated workshop (you will be required to guide discussion or activities)
- Poster Presentation (including an A1 poster plus a 75-minute presentation)
- Will there be an additional presenter?
 - Yes
 - No
- Your postal address and email address

What is relevance?

By relevance we mean the ways in which we can connect the subjects of our museums and heritage sites to potential and actual visitors.

Relevance is...	Relevance is not...
Giving visitors something they connect with at a museum or heritage site	A 'tick box' to provide token stories or objects relating to local communities for its own sake or political correctness
Asking, understanding and giving what visitors want in a way that is true to the museum or heritage site	Ignoring the strengths of a museum or heritage site's collection or buildings in favour of 'giving the public what they want'
Finding a way to make museums and heritage sites visible and something the public want to go to	Diluting the uniqueness of a museum or heritage site
Connecting with and recognising value in the public for a museum or heritage site	'Dumbing down'

Is this an academic or museum and heritage professional conference?

This conference will be mainly attended by museum and heritage professionals, but will cover a range of approaches from the theoretical to the practical.

Speakers from any background, academic or professional are welcome to submit a proposal.

See the Call for Papers on our [website](#) for guidance for potential speakers.

Will my paper or idea work for this conference?

- Does your proposal fit with one of the conference themes?
- Can your paper be delivered in the time allowed?
- Can your paper be delivered in the format you have chosen?

If the answer is yes to these three questions, you should submit a paper which will be reviewed by our expert panel.

Contact the team at Relevance2017@hrp.org.uk if you have any questions about submitting your proposal

What are the formats of the conference sessions?

You should select one format for your proposal

- **Research papers:** 20 minute talks on recent research or theoretical issues
These are 20 minute talks by the presenter on a recent research or theoretical issue.
Research papers will be grouped into sessions of similar themed papers to promote discussion and sharing of ideas.

Presenters often use a PowerPoint or similar slide show to illustrate their findings, and show the audience their museum or heritage site.

Research papers should be one of the following formats:

Empirical

- Observations, questions, or problems that prompted the investigation reported
- Previous investigations or theories on the subject matter
- Questions or hypotheses that guided data (information) gathering
- The data collected or used
- The results, their significance and what they are bringing to your museum or heritage site, or the wider sector
- Some thoughts for future investigations

Historical

- The subject matter investigated and relevant publications
- The question(s) that prompted the investigation
- A definition of its main concepts
- The primary and secondary sources utilised and the results including:
 - Establishing the facts
 - Describing the facts
 - Explaining the facts, i.e. what is the cause?
 - Consequences
 - Placing results in a wider context
- Their contribution to museum or heritage sites, or the wider sector
- Some thoughts for future investigations

Theoretical

- The observation, question, or problem that prompted the investigation
- A short synthesis of the published texts on the subject matter
- A definition of the main concepts used
- The steps taken to answer the question i.e. the methodology
- The end results of the investigation, what it brings to your museum or heritage site, or the wider sector
- Some thoughts for future investigations

Please note: Theoretical research should not be confused with presenting one's own opinion or position

- **Lightning or Express talks** for the Market of Ideas: 7 minute talks which cover one idea or provoke thought and debate

This is a format seen more often in modern conferences. The best Express talks cover one concrete idea or project carried out by you or your institution and do not go into much detail. It is important to practice and time yourself before an Express talk as there are a lot of presenters in an Express talk session.

For the presenter this is a fast-paced and exciting way to showcase a great idea or ask a difficult question. For the audience, this is a great session to learn and think about a range of new ideas transferrable to other institutions.

Presenters often use a few PowerPoint or similar slides to illustrate their idea.

- **Theme papers:** 5 minute introduction by 4 people, followed by 40 minute discussion. We invite panels and individual papers



This format is great for groups of people who want to discuss different aspects of a different theme. It could be presenters from different countries talking about the same issue they have encountered in their work. It could be presenters from the same organisation showing how they approached an issue in different ways. It could be presenters who have very different ideas about a particular issue.



Theme papers must include a rigorous and critical presentation of a subject closely related to one of the sub-themes of the conference.

Presenters often use one or two PowerPoint or similar slides to illustrate their point

- **Workshops:** 75 minute session. This must include practical or skills-based elements

This format is good for presenters or groups of presenters who wish to demonstrate and share a particular skill with international colleagues.

It could be a chance to teach a new technique, learning approach, a new way to use technology, or a new approach to learning.

The session must be practical, participatory and involve delegates doing or learning something new. Presenters often use one or two PowerPoint or similar slides to illustrate their point

- **Posters:** A1 posters on any topic related to the theme or strands. Poster presenters will be required to talk about their posters for one 75 minute session.

Posters are a good way to share information with a range of delegates. We are looking for poster proposals which show one or two key points which address the conference theme, not an essay or academic article on your subject.

Posters should contain text and images or diagrams to illustrate your points.

Posters should also include the following information:

- Name of the author, institution and e-mail address
- What the subject is and why it is important
- How the project was original
- Results or end product
- Consequences or follow-up

Presenters will need to bring a 2m x 1m poster which will be mounted on boards in the poster session room, and available for delegates to look at for 2 days of the conference.

There will also be a 75 minute session where presenters can stand by their posters and discuss with delegates who want to learn more. This is a good opportunity to meet new professionals and to discuss your work in detail with many others in the sector.

See [this guide](#) from Leicester University for tips on how to make a good poster presentation.

Who are the keynote speakers?

Keynotes will be invited speakers who can inspire us and make us think about the key theme of the conference.

Exciting keynote speakers will be announced in Spring 2017, watch our [website](#) or #relevance2017 for further details

What are the key dates?

- 8 March 2017: Submission deadline, midnight (London time, GMT)
- Late April 2017: Acceptance notification

- May 2017: Early Bird bookings open
- June 2017: Early Bird booking ends
- July 2017: Ordinary booking rate
- Mid-September 2017: Booking closes
- 14-18 October 2017: Conference

Why hasn't my paper been accepted?

We expect a large number of high quality proposals and we do not have space for everyone. Papers will be chosen by our expert panel of heritage and learning professionals from CECA, DEMHIST, Historic Royal Palaces and host partners.

Papers will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Papers which address the conference themes
- Papers which are deliverable in the format and time allotted

Will there be translation? Can I present in a language other than English?

The main conference language will be English, but papers in any [ICOM language](#) are welcome. There will be translation available at the conference.

How much will the conference be?

The conference fee, which does not include flights or accommodation, will be around £300 for a full price tickets.

Check the [website](#) in April and May for the release of Early Bird tickets which are discounted.

How can I keep up with conference news?

Regularly check our conference [website](#)

Or look at the DEMHIST and CECA Facebook and Twitter feeds for exciting announcements, previews and news.

Our conference hashtag on Twitter is #relevance2017

How do I submit my proposal?

Please submit online via our [website](#)

If you have any difficulties you can contact the team at Relevance2017@hrp.org.uk

