# Guidance for Speakers

## 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

Please read this information very carefully. Your presentation <u>must</u> adhere to these guidelines.

Guidance for speakers

*Our audiences*

• Are international

There will be an international audience so please provide enough context for the delegates to understand your site or museum. Pictures paint a thousand words so show us your museum or heritage site rather than list text on bullet points.

• Are here to learn

Be upfront about learning objectives of your talk from the start. We value presentations that are <u>honest and open</u> about failures as well as successes.

• Want to see all the papers

Timing is really important and <u>people who over run their time slot may not be able to finish giving their paper.</u>  This is to ensure that all speakers have a chance to present their work. There will be an international audience, so speak slowly.  This way everyone has a chance to understand and the translators will have a chance to work.

• Will be online

We will record speakers and may also livestream audio and/or video from the event.
We will be live tweeting the conference, so include any twitter usernames or URLs in your opening slides for maximum impact.

*Presentations*

The main conference language will be English, but papers in the main rooms will be translated from English into French or Spanish and from either French or Spanish into English. The language they will be translated to will be determined once we have confirmed numbers of delegates.

As a speaker, you agree to provide your slides **2 weeks before the event** at which you are speaking. Usually, slides are in PowerPoint or Keynote format: please get contact us if you would like to use another format.

We don't ask for full papers in advance, but presenters may be asked to submit a written paper for online publication in the Conference proceedings.  As a speaker you agree to provide us with your slides for upload to the Conference Slideshare space and embedding on the DEMHIST and CECA websites. You retain full copyright over your slides but grant DEMHIST and CECA the rights to use these as appropriate on the DEMHIST and CECA websites.

## Main theme

The theme for this conference is relevance and the role and of museums and historic houses to provide value and meaning for its audiences. We know audiences matter, but how are museums and historic houses making a difference to those we engage with, and is it enough? Are audiences having new and authentic experiences in our spaces, through objects and stories that unlock meaning for them?

> *Instead of thinking of relevance as a link, I started thinking of relevance as a key. Imagine a locked door. Behind the door is a room that holds something powerful – information, emotion, experience, value. The room is dazzling. The room is locked.*
>
> *Relevance is a paradox. It is essential; it gets people to pay attention, to walk in the door, to open their hearts. But it is also meaningless without powerful programming on the other side of the door. If the door doesn't lead to valuable offerings, if nothing touches peoples' hearts, interest fades. They don't return.*

- The Art of Relevance, Nina Simon, 2016

### Theme 1: Heritage and local community

Museums and historic houses sit within local communities, but how can they connect to the audiences on their doorstep?

- How can museums and historic houses attract new and more diverse local audiences?
- How can our local communities find value and meaning in our stories, buildings and collections?
- How can we measure and demonstrate our value to and impact within local communities?
- How can learning programmes connect museums and heritage sites to local communities?

### Theme 2: Heritage and nationality

Museums and historic houses often form key narratives within national histories.  How can we ensure these narratives stay relevant to our audiences as ideas of national identity change over time?

- How have museums and historic houses been used to develop national identities?
- What is the role of the museum and historic house today within narratives of national identity?
- Can museums and historic houses promote or consolidate social cohesion? Should they be instrumental in developing this?

### Theme 3: Learning in the heritage environment

Museums and historic houses are places of learning and engagement.  What is their particular value as a tool of education and/or learning, and how can we stay relevant to formal and informal learners and teachers?

- Learning inside the building: What is the value and impact of learning in a heritage site?
- Taking the historic house outside: can the unique experience of a heritage site be taken outside the physical space?
- Beyond history: what subjects can be learned through visits to historic houses?

### Theme 4: Innovation and learning

Technology and society are changing rapidly.  How do we become and connect to audiences that are used to change and the 'new'?

- How are we telling our stories, sharing our buildings and collections creatively and differently?
- How can we integrate digital seamlessly to audiences which meet their expectations of technology today?
- Innovation for innovation's sake: where is newness not the answer?
- Doubling up: how can we use partnerships to make our sites more relevant?
- How are we establishing ourselves as entrepreneurial and independent?

### 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.

Research papers should be one of the following formats:

### Empirical

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

### Historical
o The subject matter investigated and relevant publications
o The question(s) that prompted the investigation
o A definition of its main concepts
o 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
o Their contribution to museum or heritage sites, or the wider sector
o Some thoughts for future investigations

### Theoretical
o The observation, question, or problem that prompted the investigation
o A short synthesis of the published texts on the subject matter
o A definition of the main concepts used
o The steps taken to answer the question i.e. the methodology
o The end results of the investigation, what it brings to your museum or heritage site, or the wider sector
o 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 will 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. Posters are a good way to share information with a range of delegates. This will 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.

  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 portrait A1 poster which will be mounted on boards in the poster session room.**

  See this guide from Leicester University for tips on how to make a good poster presentation.