

Evaluation of Family Programme
Report of Research Findings

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- The Education Department at the V&A is responsible for a range of activities aimed at families, which have been running for several years. They are run on a drop-in basis and designed for children accompanied by adults with a view to encouraging interaction between the adult, child and the collections.

The four activities that make up the programme are as follows:

- **Family Activity Cart;** a mobile unit which is sited in different galleries and which offers families discovery trails and the opportunity to make or draw something based on the collections
 - **Special Activities for Families;** based on performances or workshops, these wide-ranging activities (storytelling to arts and crafts activities to hi-tech events) encourage families to use the collections to inspire their own art or craft work or to reinterpret the displays
 - **Activity Back-Packs;** currently four different back-packs are available aimed at exploring different galleries through a range of hands-on activities (jigsaws, stories, objects to handle etc)
 - **Family Trails;** six trails can be picked up at the Information Desk, each aimed at exploring a different gallery or theme through pencil and paper activities. The trails are in two parts; a worksheet for the child and guidelines for the adult.
- The number of visitors taking part in the activity programme has increased over the years although this is in part attributable to the increase in the number of events and days on which it operates. This year has seen a further increase in the number of days and the intention is to develop the programme in the future.

- The programme has benefited from listings in publications like **Kids Out** and the **Evening Standard** but data collected from visitors to the Museum reveals that the vast majority finds out about the activities once they arrive there.
- While the programme is undoubtedly successful with those taking part it could accommodate more participants and research is now needed to help the Department develop both the programme and the way in which it is marketed.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

- The aim of the research is to help inform the Education Department's decision-making about how it can best:
 - adapt the family activity programme to attract more people
 - adapt the promotional techniques it uses to attract more people
 - encourage repeat visiting
 - extend the age range at which the programme is targeted possibly to children in their early teens and toddlers.
- The research was intended to explore the opinions, behaviour and decision-making processes of current 'Users' and 'Non-Users' of the Programme.
- The sample was split between families who use the Family Programme already ("Users") and those who do not ('Non-Users'). For 'Users' we looked at the following areas:
 - the demographics, backgrounds, interests and museum visiting habits of people who use the Family Programme
 - their decision making process for a family day out, including perceptions and expectations of different venues
 - their views on the Family Programme, what they particularly liked and disliked and how it could be made more appealing to them

- their responses to some suggestions for adaptations and additions to the Family Programme.
- For ‘Non-Users’ we *additionally* looked at:
 - preconceptions and expectations of the V&A
 - how people like them could be encouraged to use the Family Programme.

1.3 Method

- The research was qualitative in approach and consisted of sixteen depth interviews with families that had taken part in the Family Programme.
- Half the families in the sample were current ‘Users’ of the Family Programme at the V&A (‘Users’) i.e. they had visited the Museum and tried the family activities independently of the research. It was important to talk to people who had discovered the Family Programme for themselves in order to explore how they used it and why they chose the V&A rather than another destination. We also wanted to evaluate the Family Programme from the point of view of those who knew it well.
- ‘Users’ were selected from those who filled in brief questionnaires during a visit to register their interest in taking part in some research on the Family Programme. The questionnaires were made available on Sundays in late August and September and during the October half term week.
- In selecting families we gave priority to those who had experience of a wide range of family activities, who had visited the V&A more than once and who ideally had more than one child.
- The other half of the families participating in the research had never visited the V&A as a family or had never taken part in the Family Programme (‘Non-Users’). They were included in order to establish what, if any, opportunities there might be to broaden the appeal of the family activities.

- In selecting the 'Non-User' families, we only included those who regularly (at least once a year) visited museums as a family since we felt that they would be more likely to be interested in visiting the V&A than families who rarely visited museums.
- Within the 'Non-User' sample, two types of families were recruited:
 - those who visited all kinds of museums including art based museums and galleries
 - those who visited museums or historical sites other than art based museums or galleries
- Across the eight 'Non-User' families, we tried to include children who ranged from toddlers to teenagers and to find families with a large age range across their children.
- 'Non-User' families were recruited before October half term from the Greater London area and were asked to visit the V&A to take part in the Family Programme during half term week.
- To ensure that all elements of the Family Programme were covered in the research, each family was allocated two activities from the programme, which they were asked to try as a minimum.
- 'Non-Users' were interviewed before their visit to explore their perceptions and expectations of the V&A. Issues covered were; levels of awareness of the V&A, the Family Programme and its publicity material, expectations of the trip and the reasons for not visiting the Museum previously.
- We felt that it would be more appropriate to interview respondents in the unit in which they visited the Museum i.e. as families, rather than in group discussions, in order to understand the dynamics of the individual family's experience.
- Respondents were interviewed in their own homes within three weeks of their visit to the V&A. The advantages of this approach were:

- any interference to the dynamics of the visit caused by the presence of an interviewer was avoided
 - a considered response to the entire day was researched. If respondents had been interviewed in the Museum, it would have been difficult to judge when to talk to them without interrupting their day out or missing their experiences of the remainder of the visit
 - the willingness of respondents to participate was ensured by this arrangement and the interviews were therefore likely to be more productive than if they were conducted in the Museum. This is supported by the fact that some of the 'Users' who had completed forms indicating that they would be prepared to take part in the research were unwilling to commit to an hour long interview. People such as these might have been irritated and alienated if they had agreed to take part in an interview during their visit without appreciating how long it would take
 - some of the younger children seemed to gain confidence as the interview progressed as a result of being interviewed in familiar surroundings
 - children as young as two years old were able to take part and make some contribution to the research.
- Interviewing took place between 25th October and 18th November 1999. Copies of recruitment questionnaires and discussion guides are provided in the appendices.

2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Summary of Key Findings

- Our conclusions and recommendations are based on certain key themes we identified in perceptions of the V&A and its Family Programme.

2.1.1 *Overall evaluation*

- The Family Programme researched extremely well in terms of meeting the objectives set out in the brief. The activities were hugely popular with the majority of respondents and were successful in encouraging the children to look closely at the exhibits and discuss them with their parents.
- Any adaptations that we have suggested are, therefore, relatively minor and are covered below.

2.1.2 *Different attitudes to culture and the arts*

- Families were recruited as either 'Users' or 'Non-Users' of the Family Programme. In our analysis we have grouped families into two further categories according to their attitudes towards culture and the arts. These are:
 - **'Actives'** - families led by parents who are active consumers of culture. These parents were intrinsically interested in cultural activities and enjoyed visiting art-based galleries and museums. Two of the 'Non-User' families who visited art based museums and galleries and all of the 'Users' fell into the 'Active' category. One family, which did not currently visit art-based museums and galleries, has additionally been classed as 'Active'. Despite the parents' genuine interest in art and culture they felt that their children were not yet old enough to be exposed to such subjects.
 - **'Passives'** - families in which the parents are 'Passive consumers of culture'. These parents had no personal interest in

the arts and were likely to undertake outings with their families to places where the subject matter was more popular rather than cultural. Some occasionally took their children to art based attractions but this was usually because the content of the museum had some relevance to a specific school project. The parents of one Passive family felt that their children needed to learn about culture and the arts but did not want to be involved in the process themselves.

2.1.3 *Lack of awareness of the Family Programme*

- Awareness of the Family Programme was extremely low amongst all of the categories of respondents, 'Actives' and 'Passives', 'Users' and 'Non-Users'.
- None of the 'Non-Users' had heard about the programme before taking part in the research. The majority of 'Users' had only recently discovered the programme.
- All but two 'Users' had discovered the family activities once they had arrived at the Museum. One of the remaining respondents had found out about the Family Programme as a result of a recommendation from a friend. Only one had responded to publicity material, in the form of the V&A's Website.
- It seems that Active parents are gradually discovering the family activities at the V&A for themselves because of their own interest in the content of the Museum. Passive families, conversely, are unlikely to come across the Family Programme.

2.1.4 *Perception that the V&A is not 'child-friendly'*

- Most of the 'Non-Users' said that they did not expect the V&A to be a museum that is suitable for children. Their experiences of the Museum tended to confirm this perception and, for the 'Passives', this contributed to their overall lack of enjoyment of the whole day.
- Many of the 'User' and 'Active' adults *agreed* that the V&A has not been *designed* with the needs of children in mind. They seemed, nevertheless, to

feel that the Museum is an appropriate venue for a family outing as their interest in the content, and the educational value of the subject matter, compensated for any practical inconvenience.

2.1.5 *Lack of interest in the subject*

- 'Passives', by definition, lacked an intrinsic interest in the subject matter and were therefore unlikely to visit the V&A unless they were provided with a strong, specific reason to do so. If one of their children was studying a topic at school relating to something on display in the Museum this might be an incentive to make a family trip.
- 'Passives' were interested in several of the ideas for developing the programme, especially the hands-on and computer based activities. Nevertheless, our impression was that, even with this added dimension, the Family Programme would be unlikely to encourage 'Passives' to visit the V&A. It did not seem that there was any way of altering their essentially negative attitude which was based on their fundamental hostility to the subject matter.

2.1.6 *Expectation of Victoriana*

- The majority of 'Non-User' children (mainly 'Passives'), and a few of their parents, expected the Victoria & Albert Museum to primarily focus on exhibits from the Victorian period. The realisation that this was not the case seemed to result in great disappointment for both children and adults.
- A trail or back pack that highlighted and explored the Victorian objects, perhaps with some reference to the National Curriculum's approach to the topic, might help to address this problem for families visiting the Museum in the future.

2.1.7 *Gender suitability*

- There was a feeling amongst some of the parents that the Family Programme was more suitable for girls than boys. This was felt to be due to the cultural content of the Museum and the subject of individual activities, such as fan making.

- This view was not necessarily borne out by the responses of many of the boys in the sample, however. The majority of the boys in the 6 to 12 year old age range were extremely enthusiastic about the activities they had taken part in. It may be that some parents *expected* the Museum to be more suitable for girls and, therefore, looked for evidence to post-rationalise this assumption.
- It is important to note the existence of the perception, however, as it appears to be an important factor in the decision making process for some.

2.2 Who should be targeted?

- An important issue for the V&A's education department to consider in the development of the Family Programme, is whether or not they want to target *all* families who visit museums i.e. all of the categories of potential visitors, as identified in this research.
- A policy of attracting a wider audience has the advantage that it could dispel the current perception of the V&A as a white, middle-class, highbrow and thus exclusive museum.
- Such a policy, however, could potentially be extremely alienating to the existing visitors to the Family Programme and, we suspect, to the Museum as a whole.
- The evidence from this research suggests that a more populist programme of activities would not necessarily persuade 'Passives' to visit the Museum as they were simply not interested in the 'cultural' subject matter at the V&A.
- Furthermore, it would be difficult to address several of the **key issues** (see above) to accommodate the 'Passives' without a significant investment in the range of activities, marketing and promotion. If the V&A wish to attract a wider audience, on the basis of this research, they would need to:
 - create a more popular programme including more hands-on and computer based activities.

- create a ‘child-friendly’ atmosphere by adapting facilities, the style of displays and the attitudes of staff
 - dramatically increase the publicity spend on the Family Programme
- An alternative route would be to concentrate on targeting more ‘Active’ families. This research indicated that the Family Programme was highly successful, and the V&A very popular, amongst this group. In addition, there appeared to be untapped potential in the market since some of the ‘Users’ had only recently discovered the activities.
- In order to target the ‘Actives’, the V&A would simply need to develop their publicity material and perhaps introduce some minimal adaptations to the Family Programme.
- Our recommendation is that the most efficient and realistic method of attracting more visitors to the Family Programme would be to target more families from the same backgrounds, interests and attitudes as those who already visit i.e. ‘Actives’.

2.3 Adapting the Family Programme to Attract More ‘Active’ Visitors

- Attracting ‘Actives’ to the Family Programme will probably not require any far reaching changes to the publicity or practices of the V&A or to the types of activities that they provide for families. Some relatively minor adaptations, however, could increase the volume of ‘Users’.
- One way of encouraging new visitors to the Museum might be to link displays and publicity to primary *and* secondary National Curriculum subjects. The British Museum appears to have benefited enormously from the Egyptians project that all children work on in Year 4.
- The Family Programme could perhaps exploit the fact that some ‘Users’ are already attracted to the V&A to assist with National Curriculum projects on the Victorians on the misapprehension that the Museum primarily contains

Victorian exhibits. This might be achieved by providing trails and backpacks that lead them to the Victorian artefacts that are there.

- There appears to be scope for encouraging existing visitors to the V&A to bring their children and grandchildren to the Family Programme. One way to spread the word would be to position the programme as the *young person's introduction to the V&A*. This message could be publicised to Friends and via any other ongoing communications with existing visitors, most of whom visit at the moment without (grand)children. We suspect the majority of these visitors are simply unaware of the Family Programme; they are clearly predisposed to visit the Museum, and many of them will have children or grandchildren.
- To complement this and to attract a wider section of the 'Active' market, we suggest that ways of developing mailshots targeted at visitors to other, similar museums could be explored.

2.4 Encouraging Repeat Visiting

- Many of the 'User' families enjoy the Family Programme so much that they visit as many as eight times a year. These families are clearly very happy with the activities in general but are beginning to feel that they could be renewed. A wider variety of backpacks might encourage even more frequent repeat visiting.
- In conjunction with this, many of the families felt that they would be more inclined to return if there were clearer guidelines, in both the publicity material and inside the Museum, explaining the contents and age suitability of the back-packs.
- The apparent variability of the appeal of the Special Activities led some families to request clear descriptions, in the Museum and publicity material, about what these entail. This would allow families to choose the times when it would be most appropriate to go.
- The distribution of the family activities seemed to be fairly haphazard and inconsistent. Some families were not offered trails or had not heard about the

Special Activities. Visitors appeared to have stumbled across many of the activities, such as the backpacks as they were walking round. It might make sense, therefore, to provide a clearly sign-posted, single point of contact for all the children's activities. Families would then be aware of how much the Family Programme had to offer and might be encouraged to visit more frequently.

- Several of the 'Users' expressed surprise at the fact that they had never received any mailings from the V&A to let them know about activities for children that are available in the holidays. 'Active' families could be encouraged to visit more often if a database was compiled so that current 'Users' could be sent leaflets detailing the upcoming events and activities.

2.5 Extending the Age Range of the Programme

- The provision for toddlers seems to be adequate as far as most of the parents were concerned. Several of the parents with toddlers reported that the smallest children were quite content to copy their older siblings by lying on the floor and scribbling on a piece of paper.
- All of the suggestions for additional activities for toddlers were felt to have appeal but not to be essential. We therefore suggest that extending the programme for toddlers is not a priority.
- *Facilities* for toddlers, however, are particularly important. Those families who brought very young children found the lack of eating facilities and the poor signage (especially to the toilets) problematic.
- In addition, the leaflet could indicate that children of all ages are welcome to join in with the activities as far as they can, to avoid deterring potential visitors who might not expect toddlers to be catered for.
- The small number of older children in the sample did not feel at all well catered for. The special activities, in particular, were felt to be aimed at children younger than they are. Many of the suggested activities were very popular, not only with the older children but also with several of the younger children and even the adults in the sample.

- Some of the activities, however, seemed to fall into the 'dumbing down' category or were viewed as superfluous or impractical. It will be very important, therefore, to emphasise the educational value of these activities and the integral importance of looking at the artefacts.
- Teenagers appear to need to be persuaded that the activities at the Museum will be relevant and interesting to them. One way to achieve this would be to highlight the links of the activities and displays to the secondary curriculum, in the publicity literature. The Museum could be advertised as a useful resource for Art and Design courses, for example.
- Teenagers may be encouraged to visit the V&A if they can access an interesting, stimulating and well publicised Website. Recent research published by NOP shows that Internet penetration is 51% amongst 15-17 year olds and 49% amongst 11-14 year olds, compared with 20% amongst the 45-54 year old age group.
- The Teen market, however, is always difficult to attract to museums. Furthermore our findings, which suggested that many of the V&A's proposals for activities for teenagers could be extremely popular, should be treated with care as they were predominantly based on the views of adults and children aged 12 and under.
- We therefore recommend that the Family Programme could carry out a one-off activity to test the market. This could perhaps come in the form of a pre-booked event that would aim to generate positive PR. A famous fashion designer giving teenagers advice on clothes and design and giving them the opportunity to try on clothes or a celebrity artist holding a workshop might attract welcome media interest.

2.6 Adapting Promotional Material

- We recommend that the promotional material should highlight the benefits of a trip to the Museum rather than simply listing all of the activities on offer. The benefits that could be emphasised include its advantages over the NHM and

SM i.e. its educational value, usefulness as a resource for school projects and lack of crowds.

- The publicity should emphasise the fundamental message that the V&A is now a child-friendly Museum. Separate literature, outlining what is available for children and teenagers and giving a flavour of what the Family Programme involves, would help to reinforce this point. A 'family friendly' style should be used in the design of this material.
- This dissemination of this family orientated publicity material could be achieved by compiling a mailing list of current 'Users' of the Family Programme and carrying out some 'reciprocal marketing' with other art-based museums with their own family programmes.
- It would furthermore be advisable to review the publications in which the adverts appear. While Kid's Out and the Guardian were read by half of the 'Users', the remainder of the sample claimed that they would be more likely to read other publications such as the Daily Mail, the Times or the Telegraph.
- The Website address should appear in the publicity material and the site itself should emphasise the Family Programme and activities for teenagers. (NB there were no complaints from the respondents about the quality of the Website. We, however, had considerable trouble accessing information about the Family Programme. We suggest that a separate page is dedicated to what is on offer for children and that this is signposted on the home page.)

3 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

3.1 Family Backgrounds

- There were distinct similarities in the social backgrounds of the '**Users**'. All appeared to be fairly affluent, up market (AB) and of Anglo-Saxon origin. Four of the parents in this category were professionally involved in education of some form.
- A greater range of lifestyles and occupations was represented in the '**Non-User**' category. The social backgrounds of the 'Non-Users' seemed to vary from B to C2/D. Some of the 'Non-User' families appeared to be either less affluent than the 'User' families or the parents seemed to have come from fairly down market origins. Three of the parents from these families were also teachers (two from one family).

3.2 Attitudes towards Art and Culture

- A number of the respondents, both 'Users' and 'Non-Users', spontaneously commented that parents visiting the V&A with their family were typically white, middle-class and possibly quite ambitious for their children

"The majority of people who go the V&A are very pushy about what they want their children to do." ('User' Mother)

- This was reflected by the 'User' sample in the research. Some of the parents in the 'User' families had a professional background in the arts e.g. furniture and textile design. All had, at least, an amateur interest in the subject matter.
- Most of the children from these families (with some exceptions) were articulate, well behaved and had absorbed some of their parents' interest in the types of exhibits found at the V&A.
- The 'Non-Users' consisted of a set of people with many more diverse attitudes and interests than the 'Users'.

- There was no obvious homogeneity within either the art gallery visiting sub-sample or the set made up of those who visited other types of museum. Opinions appeared to converge more as a result of the occupations and interests of the parents rather than along the lines of their *current* outing habits.
- There was a clear division in views between those parents in the ‘Non-User’ sample who had an interest in cultural pursuits and those who did not. The former group, which included parents who were teachers, seemed keen to steer their children’s tastes towards educational days out rather than *only* encouraging “gratuitous...play” (‘User’ Father).
- The latter group tended to find ‘culture’ boring and, despite claiming that their children needed to learn about history and the arts, did not necessarily want to have to be involved in the knowledge acquisition process themselves. One mother felt that this should be the role of their schools. Family outings, as far as she was concerned, should be fun for the whole family.

“Why would we actually want to do it when they can to it anyway with the school?” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- Some parents implied that they had been unfortunate in being burdened with ‘uncultured children’ and therefore absolved themselves of responsibility for their children’s lack of interest in academic subjects

“I don’t know whether you’ve got to have boff children...it’s too highbrow history.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

“They’re just not cultured children unfortunately.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

3.3 Definitions

- The ‘Non-User’ parents who were more interested in ‘culture’ in fact shared many of the views of the ‘User’ parents. In this report families in which the parents were active consumers of culture are described as ‘**Actives**’.

- In contrast, other respondents were more passive in their consumption of the arts. This is not to say that ‘**Passives**’ did not ever visit art based museums and galleries but their preference tended to lie in other types of museums as well as more mainstream attractions.
- As already described, these attitudinal definitions do not necessarily correlate with current patterns of museum visiting however. Similar behaviour often resulted from different motivations. Families visiting habits could be explained in different ways:
 - some ‘Actives’ felt that their children were not yet ready to be exposed to art and ‘culture’ in a formal setting such as a museum
 - some ‘Passives’ were motivated to visit art-based museums, for example, the British Museum if a child was studying a particular topic at school.

3.4 Pattern of Family Outings

3.4.1 *Where?*

- The ‘Actives’ were regular consumers of many different types of museums. There was some crossover between the ‘Actives’ and ‘Passives’ in their usage of other venues. ‘Passive’ families had visited some of the same museums as the ‘Actives’ but more often went to more mainstream attractions.
- ‘Active’ parents were more likely than ‘Passives’ to visit museums and galleries without their children on some occasions.
- The vast majority of families in the research had been to the Natural History Museum (NHM) and Science Museum (SM).
- Some respondents had visited museums or attractions abroad. These included the Kennedy Centre, the Musée d’Orsay, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

- Other attractions that respondents had visited in the last few years as families were:

‘Actives’:

Art Exhibition '99	Hampton Court Palace	National Gallery
Battersea Zoo	House on the Hill	National Maritime Museum
Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood	Imperial War Museum	RAF Museum
British Museum	Kew Gardens	Royal Academy
British Library	London Aquarium	Tate Gallery
Chessington World of Adventures	London Museum	Theatre Museum
Design and Craft Centre	London Planetarium	Thorpe Park
Estorick Collection	London Transport Museum	Tower of London
Geffrye Museum	Madame Tussauds	Toy Museum
Greenwich Museum	Museum of Mankind	Wallace Collection
Hatfield House	Museum of the Moving Image	

‘Passives’:

BBC Experience	HMS Belfast	National Maritime Museum
Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood	Imperial War Museum	RAF Museum
British Museum	Kenwood House	Royal Tournament
Brighton Pier	London Aquarium	Thorpe Park
Cadbury's World Bournville	London Museum	Tower Bridge
Chessington World of Adventures	London Transport Museum	Tower of London
Hawker Sidley (Aeroplane Museum)	MOMI	Zoos and fairs

Hampton Court Palace

3.4.2 *Other interests*

- Respondents were asked to describe some of the types of family activities that they liked to do in their spare time, other than museum and gallery visiting.

- The other interests of the respondents were varied and did not seem to correlate to any of the categories mentioned (i.e. 'User'/'Non-User' or 'Active'/'Passive').
- Many of those interviewed reported that they went on holidays abroad, went camping, to 'Centre Parcs' and water parks, to the beach or to visit relatives in other parts of the country. Others went to the cinema or theatre (including the Globe).
- Most of the children seemed to be involved in lots of extra curricular activities. These included sports e.g. football (including one girl), swimming, cycling, tennis, dancing, rugby, roller hockey and running. Some went to Brownies or Rainbows.
- Several of the children also spent time playing computer games, riding bikes, taking part in drama or music activities.
- The parents often, therefore, seemed to spend much of their spare time 'ferrying' their children from place to place.
- Some parents managed to find time to play sports and go on days out with friends.

3.4.3 *When?*

- Most of the respondents reported that their family outings were usually restricted to Sundays and school holidays. A minority of mothers said that they took younger, pre-school children with them to museums at other times but this was usually for their own entertainment rather than that of the toddler.
- The only time that outings happened (outside the times currently covered by the Family Programme) was when the children were off school because of 'in-set' days. Some mothers said that they liked to take their children on day trips on these days because they could avoid the crowds at places like the Science Museum, Natural History Museum and Thorpe Park. This was unlikely to apply to the V&A, however, since overcrowding was not perceived to be a problem here.

- The frequency of days out depended on whether both parents worked, how interested the parents were in educating their children beyond the school curriculum and the ages and age range of the children in the family. The frequency with which our families visited museums or other attractions varied enormously from once a fortnight to once a year!

3.4.4 *Who decides?*

- Across the sample there seemed to be a fairly high level of democracy within the family in the decision making process. Decisions seemed to be taken by the parents, in most cases, but were based on the interests of all of the members of the family. Respondents claimed that if all tastes cannot be accommodated in one trip then they will be catered for on another visit

“This time with the V&A it was because (my son) showed an interest in clothes design.” (‘User’ Mother)

“(My husband and I) like going to the Tate as well. And we both go, then we can both sometimes manage a little bit of time to look at some pictures ourselves and get something out of it ourselves.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Some ‘Active’ parents were prepared, therefore, to indulge their children’s interests by visiting Chessington World of Adventures or the Natural History Museum. The subsequent day out, however, might be to the V&A or Tate, for example, for their own enjoyment

“We do go to the V&A because I like it...but I don’t go to Chessington because I like it.” (‘User’ Mother)

- The tastes within the ‘Passive’ families tended to converge to a greater extent than those of the ‘Actives’, so turn-taking was not necessary. All of the members of these families wanted to go to ‘fun’ places such as the BBC Experience, a military museum or the London Transport Museum. They were unlikely to go to places where the parents had no interest in the subject matter such as the V&A or other art galleries.

- Decision-making was determined, to a certain extent, by the gender split within the family. Families with more males than females tended to visit museums such as the RAF and Imperial War Museum. Female dominated families were more likely to go to art galleries.
- There was often a degree of compromise where tastes reflected gender stereotypes, however. One family sometimes addressed this problem by visiting the Natural History Museum and the V&A on the same day in order to please a boy and a girl.

3.4.5 *Triggers and Barriers*

- An important reason for choosing a particular museum was whether its subject matter and contents corresponded to something that the children were studying at school (in the past, present or future). A visit might be prompted by interest in the subject or the need to support a potential school project

“Sometimes when I have a project or something, I like to go to museums.” (‘User’ Girl aged 9)

- Several families had visited the British Museum as a result of studying the Egyptians. Parents noted that children were much more likely to be interested in topics that they already knew something about. One six year old boy, for example, claimed not to like history as much as science but had loved going to look at the Egyptian mummies in the British Museum and telling his mother what he had learnt.
- Another factor affecting the choice of venue for a day trip was the parents’ perceptions of its ‘child-friendliness’. Everyone in the sample felt that the Natural History Museum and Science Museum were places where all children were welcome and well catered for. All of the ‘Non-Users’ and a few of the ‘Users’, felt that their children were less welcome at many other galleries and museums.
- From the children’s point of view, ‘child-friendliness’ entailed interactive and hands-on activities. They wanted to go to museums where they could climb

on and touch the displays and press buttons or turn wheels. Dinosaurs were an enormous attraction for almost all of the children in the sample

“I like the moving dinosaurs.” (‘User’ Boy aged 6)

- Some families looked for the least busy places to visit, especially during half term. The British Museum, NHM and SM were felt to be unbearably crowded at certain times. One solution was to go to other museums, including the V&A, instead

“If we were in the NHM we would have been fighting with 200 children and the whole experience would have become painful and therefore discouraging.” (‘User’ Mother)

- The price of the entire day out, including entrance, travel and food, was an important factor for some of the respondents. The less affluent families and those who lived furthest from central London sometimes restricted the number of their visits or went without one of the adult members of the family to limit costs. Cafeteria prices were a major factor for this group. One mother said that she kept an eye out for special discounts and ‘freebies’ for day’s out, at Asda for example

“Being a family of five it can actually be quite an expensive day out by the time you’ve paid for train fares into town and paid the entrance to get into various places...sometimes my husband will take them up on his own because one less adult brings the price down.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- Several of the families decided on their destinations for days out on the basis of whether the various passes they owned covered them. A few of the respondents had annual tickets to the three Kensington museums or to other groups of attractions or were members of organisations that entitled them to free entry to certain venues. Such memberships included the National Art Collection Fund, Royal Academy Friends and National Trust Friends.

3.4.6 Sources of information

- The majority of the parents said that they visited museums and attractions that they had already heard of, rather than actively seeking out new places. Awareness came from word-of-mouth recommendations and their own previous experience (from childhood and before they had children).
- A number of sources were used, however, to assist with decision making and to gather further information on how to get there and details of the activities and events on offer. These included listings in Kid's Out, Time Out, City Limits, half term and holiday supplements in the broad sheets, the Metro supplement in the Times, the Guardian *Guide*, What's On in London, What to do with Children in Surrey and the Evening Standard supplement on Friday.
- None of the respondents claimed to visit museums as a direct consequence of advertising but many were aware of the posters for the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum, which they saw on the tube and in the tunnel on their way to those museums.
- One 'User' family had chosen to go to the V&A after looking for information for museums on the Internet. They had found the V&A site interesting and therefore decided to visit the Museum. Two other families claimed that they might sometimes use the Internet as an information gathering resource.
- One father used Channel 4's Teletext, (page 410 was mentioned although it has now changed) as an information source for places to visit.

4 RESPONSE TO THE V&A

4.1 Awareness and Expectations

- All of the 'Non-User' parents had heard of the V&A before becoming interested in the research but none had come across any publicity material for the Family Programme.
- Half of the 'Non-User' parents had visited the V&A before, either as a child or before having children. These parents had tended to feel that the V&A was not ideally suited for a children's day out because they had not expected the displays to be of interest to their children or interactive enough to capture their attention. The majority were under the impression that the V&A was a museum full of glass cases where children would not be welcome and would constantly need to be kept under control

"I don't really think it's a place for children to be honest with you." ('Non-User' Mother)

- The remaining 'Non-Users' had not previously visited with their families either because it had not occurred to them to do so or because they had not been given any reason to do so such as a recommendation, seeing an advertisement or because it contained exhibits relevant to school projects.
- Many of the children, and some of the parents who had not been to the V&A, expected the Museum to contain artefacts from the Victorian period. One mother commented that she had met a lady at the Museum who said that her daughter had specifically been sent her on an expedition to the V&A with her grandchildren because the children were studying the Victorians at school.
- Some of the 'Users' had visited the V&A for the first time. They had chosen to go there to make a change from other museums or because they felt that their children had become old enough to appreciate it. Like the 'Non-Users', they expected the Museum to be fairly un-child friendly and some were not disabused of this notion when they visited.

*“It has a reputation for not being a child’s museum.” (‘User’
Father)*

- However, others (fewer in number) were surprised to find that the Museum was in fact relatively family-friendly, contrary to their expectations.

4.2 Subject Matter

4.2.1 Positive Features

- Most of the features of the V&A were described by the parents rather than their children. The majority of the children, however, did talk enthusiastically about specific features in the Museum and the Family Programme (see section 5).
- The ‘Active’ parents appeared to feel that the V&A was more educational than many other places including the NHM and SM. Some felt that their children had been to the other South Kensington museums so many times that they were not learning anything more and, furthermore, these places were so child-orientated that they were almost playgrounds rather than museums

*“(The Science Museum Children’s Area is) totally teeming with people...there’s no way your kids are going to get anything from it other than it’s an area for them to let off steam.” (‘User’
Mother)*

- Many of the ‘Active’, and especially the ‘User’, parents felt that the subject matter of the V&A was of much greater interest to them as adults than other places they visited. They enjoyed the venue themselves and several of the mothers in the ‘User’ group took their children to the V&A because it was their own favourite Museum

“It is a day out for me, so I am very pleased that the V&A have done so many things for children.” (‘User’ Mother)

- The majority of the children, conversely, were more interested in the content of the NHM or SM than the V&A, despite having enjoyed themselves at all

three. Only one child mentioned the V&A as first choice, when asked which museum they would prefer to go to, and she does in fact visit the Museum of her own accord. Those who preferred other attractions did, however, seem to feel that the V&A was a more than adequate substitute for the NHM or SM.

- Most of the families taking part in the research additionally looked at displays that were not part of the Family Programme. Parents and children had enjoyed the costume gallery (especially a dress made from bras!), the jewellery gallery, the armoury section, the Raphael cartoons, ‘*the statues of buildings*’ (Cast Gallery) and the gift shop. More than one respondent spontaneously mentioned that they thought the blue glass sculpture in the entrance to the Museum was one of the most attractive things in it

“The most fascinating bit was actually the dresses and it told you about them, how stupid they can make dresses out of bras!”

(‘Non-User’ Girl aged 9)

4.2.2 Negative Features

- The most prevalently commented upon and most significant negative feature of the V&A expressed by ‘Passives’ was a distinct lack of interest in its subject matter.
- This seemed to be particularly common among, although not exclusive to, male respondents

“It’s just not my scene personally, I am not an arty type of person.” (‘Non-User’ Father)

- Some of the ‘Non-User’ children (and even some of the parents who had not visited before) were extremely disappointed when they discovered the lack of Victorian exhibits. Children were interested in seeing Victorian artefacts because they either had, or were about to, study the Victorians at school

“There wasn’t much stuff talking about...the Victorian times.”

(‘Non-User’ Girl aged 8)

4.3 Atmosphere

4.3.1 Positive Features

- The absence of a commercial focus in comparison with the NHM and the SM was appreciated. The technology-driven basis of the other two was felt to make people more demanding of museums and lazier about looking at the exhibits themselves

“(The commercialism) makes you less respectful of what you’re looking at...it’s ‘oh god, that dinosaur doesn’t move, how boring’.” (‘User’ Father)

- A significant advantage of the V&A for many parents was the fact that it is quiet, large and uncrowded, especially in comparison with the other Kensington museums

“There are times when you don’t want hordes of children coming.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Several of the mothers, especially the ABs, liked the ‘civilised’ atmosphere of the Museum. They appreciated the lack of noise, the well-behaved children and the cloakroom facilities. Parents and children spontaneously commented on how much they liked the garden with the fountain in the centre of the Museum.

“We walked through a long gallery to the garden and had our lunch...it’s (got a) fountain.” (‘Non-User’ Girl aged 9)

4.3.2 Negative Features

- Some of the families that expected the Museum to be unsuitable for children came away with their perceptions confirmed. The atmosphere of the inside of the building was described by a few of the parents as dark and depressing and reminiscent of how museums used to be when they were children. One mother felt that the curators needed to approach the displays from a child’s eye if they wanted to attract more families

“There was one particular corridor...that I found deeply depressing.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

4.4 Practical Issues

- There were a number of complaints about the provision of eating facilities at the V&A. One family, in particular, reported that their visit had been largely ruined by the lack of suitable eating places within the Museum on the particular day that they had gone. They said that the cafeteria had been closed for a private function and the temporary café was highly disorganised and only provided two choices of sandwiches, neither of which their children liked, at prices that they were not keen to pay

“I certainly didn’t like the prices in the cafeteria...it ruins your day out.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- Many other families reported that the restaurant prices were outside of their budget and the food on offer was not very attractive to their children

“Mummy takes snacks for us because we don’t like the food there.” (‘User’ Girl aged 7)

- One family, however, was extremely pleased with the standard of the restaurant, which they described as providing ‘proper food’

“I’d be worried if they did the children’s menus...the quality wouldn’t be there.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- A further problem for many families was that they were confused about where they were allowed to eat packed lunches. They complained that they had to eat outside the building or outside the restaurant, which meant that parents were unable to buy and drink a cup of coffee whilst their children were eating. The NHM and SM were felt to have better eating facilities for a wide range of ages of children than the V&A.
- Some respondents spontaneously commented that they had had trouble finding the toilets or the exhibit rooms where the activities began. Everyone in

the research agreed that it was a difficult building to navigate. This was not a great problem for most, however, and was even an advantage for a minority. One family claimed that the labyrinth-like atmosphere added to the mystery and magic of the place

“It’s still completely mysterious and I think as long as that mystery remains it will be a great place to go...don’t sort out the signage!” (‘User’ Father)

- The portable and light aluminium chairs were seen as a well thought out facility.
- The lifts caused problems for some, although one family felt that the ‘courteous’ message of apology compensated for any inconvenience caused. Another family felt that getting stuck in the lift for half an hour before being rescued had been the high point of their trip!
- A minority complained about the journey to the V&A. They said they would not usually go to museums in central London because of the expense of travelling by public transport and the difficult of parking, especially in the Kensington area. They claimed that a car park would encourage them to visit more often.

4.5 Child Orientation

- Reports of the attitudes of staff towards visitors varied hugely. Some respondents were extremely pleased with the courteous manner of, and the level of service provided by, the people working in the Museum. These families felt that their children were made more welcome than they had expected and were surprised to find that the children were not being told not to touch anything wherever they went

“The fact that you feel wanted there was quite good, you didn’t feel that you were getting in the way you know of more high-profile visitors.” (‘User’ Father)

- Others reported the exact opposite, claiming that staff had been either rude or unhelpful when they had asked them for assistance. Some complained that

their children were told not to touch things in an abrupt and unfriendly way. They felt this was unproductive because the children had not been given a reason *why* they should not touch. Another family was quite disgruntled when they asked a member of staff where the Victorian things were and were told, in seemingly rude terms, that there were lots around the Museum, if they looked for them

“We asked the man and he just goes, ‘If you look around! Look carefully”, but there wasn’t much.” (‘Non-User’ Girl aged 8)

5 FAMILY PROGRAMME

5.1 Awareness and Expectations of Family Programme

- None of the 'Non-Users' had heard of the Family Programme before taking part in the research.
- Six of the 'Users' discovered the children's activities for themselves when they visited the Museum

"(We found the backpacks) by accident really...we were just there, probably to see an exhibition or something and happened to find them." ('User' Mother)

- One family had found some details of the Family Programme on the Internet and another family went on the recommendation of a friend.
- Most of the 'Non-Users' had relatively high expectations of the Family Programme after seeing the promotional material. Respondents seemed impressed by the number and quality of the activities on offer for children.
- Some members of the 'Non-User' families, particularly the older children, were not intrigued by the leaflet or adverts, however, as they did not expect the activities to be aimed at their age group.
- One of the families included a 13 year old boy who went to the V&A but did not take part in the Family Programme and his 16 year old brother who refused to go on the trip. Some of the older children in other families refused to take part in certain parts of the Family Programme. The reasons that they, or their parents, gave for them not having taken part were that they expected the activity or activities to be 'babyish', boring or aimed at girls (all of the teenagers who refused to take part were boys).
- The 'User' family who had visited for the first time and who knew of the Family Programme, before visiting, was uncertain about how successful the activities

would be. From the information on the Website they were unable to determine whether the activities were aimed at the age of the children in their party.

5.2 Overall Satisfaction

- The majority of the respondents felt that the Family Programme was highly successful overall. One, very 'Active' family, had discovered the Family Programme a year ago and had visited the Museum *eight* times since! They claimed that they would otherwise have visited lots of other museums in this time but kept going back to the V&A because of the Family Programme.
- The Family Programme was not universally successful, however. Satisfaction was partly dependent on respondents' views about the Museum as a whole i.e. the respondents' fundamental level of interest in the subject matter, their experience of the facilities and attitude of staff.
- More specifically, the appeal of the particular activities that were on offer on the day that each family made their visit and the activities that they took part in seemed to determine the success of the visit.
- The Special Activities, for example, varied greatly in their level of appeal to individuals. The Games and Stories from Korea were extremely popular and engaging for all of the children who experienced it, whereas Korean Fan Making was described by some as being fairly boring and badly thought out.
- Those who took part in activities that they found interesting felt that the programme exceeded their expectations. The remainder seemed to have been disappointed by their experience. There was an element of luck involved, therefore, in determining overall levels of satisfaction with the programme.
- All of the 'Users' and two of the 'Non-User' families seemed very likely to return to the V&A at least once in the next year. These families were extremely satisfied with the Family Programme and had enjoyed their visits. The general feeling amongst this group seemed to be that they were very

impressed and surprised by the quantity and quality of activities provided for children.

- The 'Active' parents and children appeared to feel that the Family Programme generally achieved the right balance between education and entertainment

*"Sometimes I learn something and sometimes it's just fun."
(‘User’ Girl aged 9)*

- Three of the parents of the remaining five 'Non-User' families felt that they might go back when their children were a little older. Two sets of parents claimed that they would like to go again, but would not take their children. One family would almost certainly not be going back at all.
- All of the families that took part in the research claimed to have spent at least two hours in the V&A and some had spent most of the day and only left because the Museum was closing. None of the respondents reported that there was not enough to do. This demonstrated that many of the children were kept entertained by the experience, whether or not they or their parents claimed to have enjoyed the day.
- Some families were so carried away by the Family Programme that the number of activities they attempted to fit in did leave some of the smaller children exhausted

"I was on my last knees when we got outside." (‘Non-User’ Girl aged 5)

- A minority of parents expressed the view that the Family Programme seemed to be more geared towards, and appealing to, girls than boys. A few did not feel that the Korean Fan Making, for example, was aimed at boys

"I think the girls get so much more out of these things than the boys...it was all very girlie." (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- This perception was partly determined by the activities that were on offer on the particular day that a family visited, however, as several of the boys in fact

enjoyed the trip as much as any of the girls. The idea of the backpacks was particularly popular with boys under the age of ten. One 'Non-User' family had been asked to take part in a family trail for the purposes of the research but their seven year old son had seen other children with back-packs and had persuaded them to do one of those instead

"He saw everyone with the back-packs and he pestered us."
(*'Non-User' Mother*)

- Those parents who had a low interest in the subject matter or had not enjoyed their day felt that their children had not got much out of the experience. The impression that the children themselves gave of their day did not necessarily corroborate this, however.
- Most of the children appeared to have absorbed quite detailed information about the objects that they had looked at as a result of taking part in the Family Programme. This was the case irrespective of whether they claimed to have been interested in the subject matter or whether they had had an enjoyable day (See section 5.3)
- Almost all of the parents felt that their children had learnt more through the Family Programme than they would have done if they had only walked around the Museum. One mother of an extremely bright six year old boy felt he had learnt more at the British Museum where the children's activities were not as entertaining as those at the V&A. She did acknowledge, however, that her son had an unusually keen interest in museums for his age and that other children would probably learn more by doing the activities

"It was a way of getting them to stop and look at things, so it was worth it." (*'User' Mother*)

- Some additionally felt that they had explored rooms in the Museum, with the Family Programme, that they would not otherwise have gone to

"(The activities) take us to places we wouldn't ordinarily go."
(*'User' Mother*)

- Most of the older children in the sample (those over 10) either felt that they were not currently catered for by the Family Programme, or that they might not be very interested in continuing to do the activities in the future.
- Several of the parents appreciated the fact that the activities absorbed their children to such an extent that *they* themselves were able to look at objects

“While they are looking for the magnifying glass, you can get a sneak look at other things.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Families with a wide age range of children under 10 found that the Family Programme as a whole was very successful in spanning the interests of all of the children, which was an attribute, they said, that few other attractions shared

“It managed to cross the age gap and I don’t find many things that actually fit both of my children.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- All of the ‘Active’ parents had either recommended the V&A’s Family Programme to others or expected to do so in the future

“I’ve been raving about it to everyone ever since.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

“I’ve told people they do a really good art cart on a Sunday.” (‘User’ Mother)

- The children of these families also felt that they would probably recommend the V&A to others but some felt that they might only spread the word to academically orientated children and children who like art, especially girls

“I would recommend it to a girl called Annie because she is a bit boring!” (‘Non-User’ Girl aged 11)

- One ‘Active’ ‘Non-User’ mother seemed amazed that word had not *already* reached her about the V&A’s Family Programme

"I would have expected to hear about it from someone." (Non-User' mother)

5.3 Individual Activities

- Each of the four activities in the Family Programme has been designed with the aim of encouraging adults and children to discuss things together, to facilitate learning and to focus the children's attention on the objects and contents in the displays.
- Children were able to recall the content of the displays in great detail, seemingly as a result of the activities, which they felt made them look more closely at the exhibits

"You had to look carefully in the thing, because sometimes it didn't show you a picture of it." (User' Girl aged 6)

- Some examples of the descriptions given by the children were:
 - on the **Activity Cart** children had looked closely at Chinese dragons, the designs on carpets and a statue of a scary monster standing on what looked like a dead animal, possibly a lion. They also remembered looking at the emperor's clothes when making a collar and cuffs

"The Chinese Dragon...you would have to go and find it and then after you had finished the drawing, you actually take a closer look at this carpet which the Chinese Dragon was on and all the things around it and then we got quite interested in the carpet and the design of the dresses they had." (User' Girl aged 11)

"I had to look at the Emperor's clothes, it was just a model with his clothes on." (User' Boy aged 6)

- in the Explorer **Back-Pack** children talked about a carved bamboo bed and fierce ugly statues of warriors with armour.

They had had to choose the best sword and this had led to a debate about the relative merits of length versus manageability.

“(We) drew these statues of these warriors...they were fierce...and they were ugly.” (‘User’ Boy aged 8)

“I chose the third (sword) from the bottom because if you chose the longest it might be really heavy so you couldn’t lift it up...so it wouldn’t be so heavy but it would still be quite sharp.” (‘User’ Girl aged 12)

- the primary detail remembered from the **Special Activity** entitled ‘Games and Stories from Korea’ was the ‘shuttlecock’ game that children play in the Far East. Children were also able to recall a story about pumpkin seeds with ‘a nice brother and a nasty brother’

“They showed us about a Korean story and they all showed us how to make sort of like this game they play and it’s a bit like football.” (‘Non-User’ Boy aged 10)

- the children who took part in **Family Trails** remembered seeing statues of a little house, Chinese animals such as a monkey, deer and dogs. One girl remembered finding a lion that looked like a dog because the artist had never seen one (she thought) and an incense burner that she had drawn.

“I learnt quite a lot about the Chinese animals because when it says... ‘Do you think the artist has seen a real lion before?’ and that is quite obvious because it looks a bit like a dog.” (‘Non-User’ Girl aged 11)

“There was this fish that was turning into a dragon and the question was... ‘does it look like it’s turning into a dragon?’...I said ‘yes’ because the eyeballs were falling out and everything and its tail was turning into a dragon’s and you could see his

mouth. You could see his veins were coming down because his teeth were pushing down and then one of the eyeballs fell out...and there was a picture of it in here and we had to sort of like shade in the bits that looked like the dragon.” (‘Non-User’ Boy aged 10)

- It should be noted that not all parents entirely agreed with the aim that the programme should encourage adult/child discussion of the objects. Some preferred to play as small a role in the activities as possible. They wanted their children to learn about the artefacts for themselves, then come to them to show off their knowledge. This, they claimed, encouraged their children to learn more since they were not under pressure to do so

“I would prefer it if the children found that they discovered it for themselves.” (‘User’ Mother)

- The twelve-year-old daughter of one of the ‘User’ families (who lived very close to the Museum) claimed that she and her friend regularly went to the V&A and took part in the Family Programme during the holidays, without any adults at all. There appears, therefore, to be scope for older children to learn about the content of the V&A entirely independently of their parents.
- The parents and children did not necessarily agree with each other about which activities were the most interesting and rewarding. The majority of the younger children enjoyed the activity cart more than anything else because they were given the opportunity to make something that they could then take home.
- The parents, however, tended to be less keen on the activity cart in comparison with some of the other activities as they felt that they were required to play too great a role in the process of making an object.

5.3.1 Family Activity Cart

- Recall of the activities that the children had taken part in was fairly high. There was some confusion about the name of the cart itself, however. It was variously described as the 'activity castle', 'activity trolley' and the 'art cart'.
- The children remembered making the collar and cuffs, hats, masks and plates or filling in activity sheets. Those who had made something had also been given a question sheet to fill in, which included locating an object. A few of the children had forgotten about this part of the activity and remembered it only when asked if they had completed it. Others could describe in great detail what they had been asked to do including details of the objects in question.
- Children under the age of eight generally needed a great deal of help from an adult for this activity. They were unable to cut out the shapes or read the instructions on the sheet. Children of all ages, however, were able to take part in the activity to a certain extent, even if this only involved using the crayons to colour in something that had been made by an adult or older child.
- Most of the children seemed to enjoy this activity and several rated it as their favourite

"The cart's really good, where you get to draw pictures and make stuff." ('Non-User' Boy aged 10)

- Less positive comments came from older children, who perceived the Activity Cart as 'babyish', and parents, who were irritated by having to make the objects for their children.
- One mother was disappointed with the size of the cart itself. She said the leaflet and the advertising had led her to expect a large wagon type structure that the children could climb into and where they would find interactive, computer-based games.
- A few of the parents felt that their children had not learnt as much from the cart as from other activities because the focus of the task was on making and

colouring rather than looking at the artefacts. This was something which they felt the children could have been doing at home.

- It was felt that the children had, nevertheless, learnt more from this activity than they would have done if they had not taken part in any aspect of the Family Programme. One child said that she usually took a closer look at the object she had been asked to draw after finishing the activity.
- The aim of attempting to encourage adults and children to work and discuss things together seemed to be achieved by this activity. For some, however, the role of the adults was *too* integral to the learning process because they had to do so much for their children.
- One way to make the cart more appealing to some of the families would be to improve the quality of the art materials available. Respondents were not overly critical of the materials provided as they were free, but did request glue rather than Sellotape, 'pointy' scissors rather than safety scissors and a better variety of coloured pencils (such as the range found at the Tate Gallery)

"Usually all the colours have gone, or the colours that are left, they are all unsharpened." ('User' Girl aged 11)

5.3.2 *Special Activities for Families*

- The Special Activities that the respondents observed or took part in during half term were: 'Korean Rhythms', 'Games and Stories from Korea' and 'Paper Fans'. The 'User' families had also taken part in other Special Activities on previous visits but had limited recall of their titles.
- There was relatively low recall, especially amongst the children, of the generic name 'Special Activities' or the names of the specific events. There was, nevertheless, a relatively high recall of the activities involved.
- The Special Activities were popular with some of the parents who had young children. They felt that a demonstration or show was a helpful interlude in the day. They appreciated the fact that children could sit quietly whilst they were listening and have a rest

"If I planned to go again, I'd have a look and try to go when there is some sort of show." ('User' Mother)

- 'Games and Stories from Korea' was the most popular of the Special Activities during half term. All of the children who took part in this were enthusiastic about it. They seemed to find the stories interesting and all particularly enjoyed making the 'shuttle-cock' game out of a plastic bag and a ball of modelling clay, which they could then kick around the Museum. They were also given a 'goody bag' containing a fridge magnet and a book about Korea, which was immensely popular.
- This was in contrast to one 'User' family's experience of story telling in the past. They felt that not enough visual aids had been used and it did not, therefore, keep the children's attention.
- A boy from an Active family felt that the audience was often too passive in the V&A's Special Activities, unlike at some other attractions

"The martial arts I thought was a bit of a let-down really. They didn't involve the audience and I think that is what you need, in the exhibitions, you need to be involved...I reckon what they need really is...sort of teach maybe this basic move...and they get everyone to stand up." ('User' Boy aged 12)

- A minority of the parents disliked the fact that the special activities were held in the middle of corridors, which meant that other "Users" were constantly stepping over them

"They sat on the floor and took up all this area, so people were actually stepping over them." ('Non-User' Mother)

- This was not a universal complaint. Others felt that the arrangement was not problematic as far as *they* were concerned but did feel that it might be irritating for adults visiting the Museum without children.
- 'Korean Rhythms' mesmerised approximately half of the children who watched it but was too loud for others. Several of the children who had not

visited on a day of a Korean percussion performance felt that they would have enjoyed playing drums in the Museum.

- The majority of respondents who took part in the Paper Fans event were disappointed with the activity as a whole. Both adults and children felt that it was very much aimed at girls and was of limited interest to boys. They also agreed that the tour of Korean patterned objects was quite boring and the interactive part was a disappointment since it consisted of colouring in fans which were already coloured, rather than making one for themselves.
- One family did enjoy this activity, however, and were grateful that the fans were already coloured because it gave young children a 'head start' so that they had something attractive to take home with them

"They got lovely coloured fans to take home." ('User' Mother)

- The parents appeared to have a very limited role in the Special Activities. In some cases this seemed to result in their becoming bored and therefore forcing their children to move on to another activity (especially in the case of the fan making). In these cases there were few opportunities for parents and children to work and discuss things together.
- Although some parents felt that their children's learning was relatively limited in these exercises, the ones who had enjoyed themselves did not consider this to be a problem. They felt it was important to retain a balance between learning and fun.
- Some of the children claimed to have learnt about Korean culture from the activities but the level of detail that they were able to recall was fairly limited

"There was this one woman doing the fans and she came in and she was wearing a wedding dress." ('Non-User' Girl aged 9)

5.3.3 Activity Back-Packs

- All four of the activity backpacks; The Artist, The Antique Detective, The Explorer and The Magic Glasses had been used by at least one family in the research.
- The names of the back-packs were not usually recalled but it was nevertheless possible to determine which one the children had used from their detailed descriptions of the contents and the activities involved.
- Children were able to describe clearly all of the activities in the Artist back-pack, for example. They talked about the drawing of the Isle of Wight, copying pictures onto light and dark paper and finding the colours and objects in the paintings

“They give you objects and you have to...find that object, an apple, in the picture...I liked the pallet thing because it tells you all the kinds of different colours they use...if they were using a white piece of paper, they would use, like that would make the colours lighter and if they used like a darker paper it would make the colours darker.” (‘Non-User’ Boy aged 10)

- Some of the most enjoyable aspects of this and other back-packs, as far as the children were concerned, were:
 - the pieces of plastic that make different colours when they are put on top of each other.
 - building pictures with fuzzy felt and the jigsaw in the Artist pack, which kept young children amused

“We did the one where there was a puzzle and there was a felt thing where you had to make the countryside.” (‘User’ Girl aged 6)

- the ‘fascinating’ glass objects, which one boy said they would not be able see elsewhere.

- Back-packs were chosen largely on the advice, or insistence, of the staff at the desk from which they were obtained

“The man said it was a new (back-pack) and would we please test that one.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Families tended to ask which pack would be most suitable for their children’s ages but the answer seemed to vary according to how many of each pack were available. Some new and some repeat ‘Users’ managed to choose the pack that they felt sounded most interesting.
- Most families did not expect to use each pack more than once. One family, however, had been through all four backpacks in the course of a year and felt that it might be interesting to go back to the first pack they had tried, the next time they visited.
- Some groups of visitors were divided over their preferred choice of pack and this seemed to cause mild, though not insurmountable, friction. Members within a visiting party did not necessarily share the same tastes. One boy, for example, visited with a friend. The two boys disagreed about what to do and their parents decided that they should let the boy whose birthday was coming up choose.
- Several mothers liked the backpacks a great deal because their children were absorbed by the contents, were restricted to a manageable space and did not require too much help. One mother also noted that the activity came in a very convenient form for carrying around the Museum, since they were already laden with packed lunches etc

“It was much easier from a mummy’s point of view.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- The maps that came with the packs were spontaneously praised for being very clear and helpful, especially in comparison with the signage and maps for the rest of the Museum.

- The children were excited by the anticipation of what they would find inside the packs and seemed simply to enjoy the idea of carrying the bag around the Museum. During an interview, one two year old girl demonstrated how much she had enjoyed walking around with the bag on, by putting her sister's school bag on her back and marching around saying "back-pack, back-pack".
- A minority of the children was disappointed that there was not a pack for each child in their party as this meant that someone had to carry the bag for the outward journey and someone else on the return.
- Respondents who took part in the Artist Pack felt that there was enough in one pack to share between two or three children. The limited number of packs did cause problems for some of those who did the Explorer pack, however. They reported that there had been arguments about which of the children was allowed to hold each of the objects. Parents commented that groups of children like to do the same activity at the same time and this was not possible where only one piece of equipment was provided.
- One 'Passive' father asserted that the packs were too limited in their focus and were aimed at people who already knew a lot about the subject or children older than his (7 and 9). He and his family were nevertheless able to describe the variations in glass, colours and shapes that they had come across in some detail.
- The majority of the parents who took part in the backpack tours seemed to feel that it had focused their children's attention on the objects to a far greater degree than if they had just walked around the Museum. One mother was extremely pleased with the way that the Artist backpack had successfully encouraged her children to think about light and dark in paintings.
- Not all of the parents or children seemed to fully understand the objective of all the activities in the back-packs. One family, for example, seemed to misunderstand the point of drawing the same scene on two different coloured backgrounds. Their interpretation was that an artist would use different

coloured backgrounds because the colour of the background itself created the dark/light effect rather than the effect of colour *on* dark and light canvasses.

5.3.4 *Family Trails*

- As with the other children's activities, there was confusion about the names of the individual trails that families had completed.
- The trails, furthermore, seemed to be the least obviously promoted activity in the Family Programme. Families were not offered the trails at the information desk when they arrived and those who had been asked to try them as part of the research had difficulty in determining where they could be found.
- One family, which had been asked to take part in one of the trails, did not do so because they had not been offered a trail by staff and felt the back-pack looked more interesting. Another family thought that they were not allowed to do the Silver Gallery Trail because it was described on the leaflet as a 'gallery trail' rather than a 'family trail' which is what they had been asked to do.
- The trails were popular with both adults and children despite these set backs and were compared favourably with most other similar activities at other museums. They were, for example, described as more professional looking than the British Museum Trail.
- Some felt they were more stimulating than trails that only involved writing and 'clipboards'. Anything that looks too much like school work, it was reported, can be extremely unappealing to some children. The presentation of the V&A's trails was not felt to be academic-looking

"If anything looks like homework or work, those of that age just don't want to know whereas if they dress it up like they did in this place, they'll spend hours and really enjoy it." (Non-User Mother)

- The trails were most successful with older children (approximately 9-12). This age group felt that the activity was aimed at them and did not feel patronised

by the tasks involved, as they seemed to have been by some of the other activities

“I liked the trail, it was more, like, adult.” (‘Non-User’ Boy aged 10)

- The notes for parents were popular as they helped parents to guide the children through the more difficult clues. One mother, who was not very keen on the experience of the V&A as a whole, enjoyed this part of the day, which she said made her feel like a teacher

“I thought it was good the parents were given an extra note, you know, so that we could guide them in the right direction.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- A few parents compared the V&A trails *unfavourably* with their experiences elsewhere. These respondents preferred a more logical structure to a trail and felt clipboards were a practical advantage. Some kind of ‘prize’ at the end of a trail was another feature that was reported to be very successful at other attractions, such as the Tower of London.
- In most cases, the trails were felt to greatly assist the knowledge acquisition process as many of the children had absorbed a great deal of detailed information

“We had to find this pot...you could either put tea in it, sweets or candles.” (‘Non-User’ Boy aged 8)

6 IMPROVING THE FAMILY PROGRAMME

6.1 Examples of Successful Family Activities at Other Museums

- A particularly artistic girl had experienced tasks at the **Tate Gallery** which, she felt, had required more imagination than those at the V&A. She did not have a preference for one type of activity but felt that both were interesting

“It was different because that one you have to, the V&A one, you have to find it and you have to draw things and add things onto it or something like that. But at the Tate you have to think what you might imagine what it would, what you think it is thinking about.” (‘User’ Girl aged 9)

- The quality of the materials on offer was an important factor affecting the enjoyment of the activities for this girl. She felt that the Activity Cart at the **Tate** was particularly successful because of the high quality of the drawing materials provided

“I would like there to be these pencils they have at the Tate and they are really, really good.” (‘User’ Girl aged 9)

- Tours and demonstrations that are pitched at the right level for children, such as those conducted at the **National Gallery** and the **SM**, were felt to help to engage children in the subject matter

“He likes those sorts of shows where, especially at the Science Museum, the one where they do all demonstrations and things.” (‘User’ Mother)

“The National Gallery is great, it is good at Christmas sometimes. There was that wonderful show that they did once. It was a magic show with pictures...and they do story telling.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Activities which involved making something had been well received at other museums such as the **London Museum**

“There was a clay making exhibition, an activity where they made these little clay jugs.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Any kind of ‘prize’ apparently has the effect of enhancing the children’s memories of the day. For parents it has the additional benefit of reducing arguments over what they allowed their offspring from the shop and thus boosts their view of the museum. The **Tower of London**, for example, provided a gift at the end of its trail

“I think they like the idea of actually getting something at the end, be it a sticker a pencil or something like that...we’ve got a house full of pencils.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Several respondents had enjoyed listening to costumed actors talking about the history and contents of various attractions. **Hampton Court** and the **London Transport Museum** were commonly cited examples

“I like the costumed characters...that’s successful at Hampton Court...that, I think, does take them further in terms of this sort of activity.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

“In the London Transport Museum...(there was) this model...I think they should dress up (in) old clothes that they’ve actually made in modern times but look like the old stuff...and then the person speaks to them and tells them about all the clothes a long time ago.” (‘Non-User’ Girl aged 9)

- Story telling had often been successful with these families at other attractions such as the **Wallace Collection**

“I like him telling you all the stories of what...happened to some of the people who wore their armour.” (‘User’ Girl aged 6)

- Some families had enjoyed dressing up and getting involved in drama at other attractions such as the **Theatre Museum**

“The other one we went to once, it was the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden and...you dressed up and you took part in plays didn't you? That was good fun...and they...had Shakespeare plays.” (‘User’ mother)

- A small number of cultural attractions, such as the **Wallace Collection** and the **Estorick Collection**, have holiday courses which two of the Active families had tried and felt had worked well

“With the Wallace Collection they do go on holiday courses, they are just one day and...you look at the costumes or the picture of costumes and then make a costume out of tissue paper with an instructor.” (‘User’ Mother)

“At the Estorick Collection...they have an education officer and she shows you round the gallery I think, this is what is said in the information and they looked at the pictures and then went away and had some projects and used the shapes of these objects to make a mobile. It was 10.15 to 12.45...we actually paid £5-6...(they were in groups of) 20 children between the ages of 6 to 12.” (‘User’ Mother)

- One boy suggested that some of the techniques used in the **Imperial War Museum** could be copied to make the exhibits more interesting. He felt that sound effects with music and conversations between characters explaining the displays would bring the history of the objects to life for him

“Listening, I think, is a very good way of remembering something.” (‘User’ Boy aged 12)

- A further suggestion was to promote the V&A as a place for birthday parties, with special, supervised activities. This had been experienced at the **NHM** and had seemed to work well.

- The **BBC Experience** had been successful for one family with a large age gap between the children because it had a special area for under fives

“There was a special area for under fives, all about the Teletubbies, so there was something for everyone really.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

6.2 Spontaneous Suggestions for Improving the Family Programme

- A number of parents and children asked for the activities to be targeted at specific ages, or for written guidance to be provided as to the age range for which each back pack was suitable

“If we’d had a description of what was in the back-packs or what was involved then we could have perhaps made a choice.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- The regular ‘User’ families were very happy with the backpacks but did feel that they had used them to such an extent that they had almost exhausted them. These families would therefore, like to see some new packs so that they could explore new galleries

“We will get to the point where we have done everything that is on offer and unless it’s changed...we’d stop going or go somewhere else and give it a rest.” (‘User’ Mother)

- Some of the children wanted more ‘hands-on’ activities but a few of the parents were against the introduction of too much ‘interactivity’ in the form of screen based displays. They felt these distracted children from the objects in the exhibits.
- More than one family said that they would like the trails to be spread over a wider area in order to make them more challenging.
- Two families tentatively suggested that it would be nice to have an artist in residence in one of the galleries, from whom the children could gain

inspiration and ideas. The presence of a celebrity artist, such as Rolf Harris, was suggested as an ideal way of encouraging children to visit the Museum.

- A nine year old girl said that she would find European history and current affairs displays interesting and suggested including topics like the 'fall of the Birmingham wall' (!)

"I wanted to know about (Henry VIII's) six wives because I didn't listen to the teacher when she was talking about that." ('Non-User' Girl aged 9)

- The 'Passive' parents and some of the parents with the more badly behaved or energetic children were keen for the Museum to provide some kind of crèche facility, involving supervised activities.
- For the 'Passives', such 'crèche' facilities would provide an opportunity for peace and quiet, a sit down and a cup of coffee. For the other parents it would provide them with an opportunity to go and look at the parts of the Museum that they found most interesting.
- Some parents were worried that a crèche would lead to an increase the number of children who were not interested in the Museum for its own sake

"You'd have to be careful about monitoring (a crèche) because a lot of parents might use that to pop along to Harrods or the Conran shop!" ('User' Mother)

- One mother (who had one young child and one child with learning difficulties) suggested that it would be helpful if parents could have an audiotape to listen to as they followed the trails. This would allow them to find out more about the objects they were looking at without having to read lots of text, and would allow them keep one eye on the children.
- Two 'Passive' mothers suggested that they would prefer not to take their children to the Museum at all and felt that it was the kind of place that was more suitable for a school trip than a family outing. They therefore suggested that the Museum should contact schools and provide facilities accordingly.

- A number of the Museum's proposals for new activities were raised spontaneously. These included; dressing up in period costume, getting involved in drama, interactive computer activities and demonstrations

"(I'd like to try on) long dresses...those ones that look like you have sofa cushions in each side." ('User' Girl aged 9)

6.3 Response to V&A Proposals for New Activities

- The lists of activities (for different age ranges) explored in the research are included in the appendices.

6.3.1 All ages

- All of the suggested ideas were popular with some of the children and rejected by others.
- The most popular activity, across the sample, was the digital photography and postcard making. Many of the parents were even more enthusiastic about this than their children. One mother had noticed the activity in the promotional material without realising that it was only available in the summer, and was disappointed that they were not to be able to take part in the activity.
- Another mother, who had worked as a textile designer before having children, was extremely excited about the potential usefulness of postcard making as a research resource

"I'd like to do (digital photography) - forget the children!" ('User' Mother)

- All of the computer-based activities were popular with the majority of the children. Some of the parents had reservations about the use of too much technology in the V&A, however.
 - the first concern of parents (and some children) was the worry about feeling under pressure to move on because they were

holding others up or not being able to have a go at all when they had come specifically to take part in the activity

“There’s a waiting problem with all those things. Unless you’ve got loads of terminals...those could become points of conflict between families.” (‘User’ Mother)

- the second was concerned with the morality of using computers as an enticement to get ‘bums on seats’ at the expense of encouraging interest in the objects themselves and the process of learning

“I think it’s nice if you can have a museum that does respect the fact that it has beautiful things in it...you can’t make it into a fun-fun place.” (‘User’ Mother)

- the last came from parents who felt that there would be no point in trekking across London to sit behind a screen when their children could do that at home.

- Performance events, getting involved with drama and dressing up were all very popular, especially with the younger children, the more extrovert children and the girls.
- The group construction event was moderately popular with the children but had less appeal for parents compared to some of the activities in which they felt that they would be required to have less involvement.
- The costumed characters were felt to be successful at other places of interest such as Hampton Court and the Tower of London. One mother said that she found actors at museums embarrassing but her children loved them.
- It was pointed out, however, that it is important that the actors are able to communicate with children to retain their interest

*“Whether they wear costumes or not is not as important as whether they actually explain it so the children can understand.”
(‘User’ Mother)*

- Handling sessions were relatively popular and had been spontaneously suggested as a new activity by a few. Unfortunately some of the children, especially boys, anticipated being able to handle objects that would be highly inappropriate, such as real guns and swords

“Can you shoot guns?!” (‘User’ Boy aged 6)

6.3.2 Teenagers

- Several of the parents were extremely impressed by the list of suggested activities for teenagers. They felt that they would be interested in taking part in many of the activities themselves and that they knew teenagers who would like to try them

“I can see my niece who’s thirteen liking a lot of this.” (‘Non-User’ Mother)

- Many of the parents and some of the older children said that there were activities on the teenagers’ list that would be appropriate and interesting for children of any age. Customising workshops, for example, was something that they felt children as young as 5 or 6 would enjoy.
- Parents and children commented that it might be more appropriate for some of these activities to be organised as a pre-booked day at the V&A. Respondents expressed fears that the activities might be full or have long queues, resulting in them missing out when they might have come along specifically to take part in one of these activities.
- Other activities from this list that stood out as being the most appealing were; designing a CD cover and opportunities to try on designer clothes and receive advice from stylists.

- The role of a visit to the V&A for the Website activities was unclear, as it was assumed that this was something that could be done at home on a PC.

6.3.3 *Toddlers*

- The majority of the 'Active' parents felt that toddlers were already adequately catered for in that they could copy their older siblings, at the cart for example, by lying on the floor and scribbling on a piece of paper. Indeed, rather than having separate activities for this age group, it was felt that many toddlers want to do what their older siblings are doing and while they may not appreciate the point of the activity, they can usually get involved.
- All of the suggestions had appeal for at least one of the respondents but were not felt to be essential. Activity sheets and generic back-packs for toddlers were relatively attractive.
- A 'soft play area' would be popular with those families where there was a large age range and more than one adult was in the party. It would allow one adult to supervise the toddler while the other helped an older child with an alternative activity.

6.4 **Availability of Activities**

- All but one of the parents were satisfied with the current availability of the Family Programme (i.e. mainly Sundays and during school holidays).
- The mother who felt there should be activities at all times also felt that the number of activities available should not be compromised whereas the rest of the respondents accepted that resources were limited and therefore needed to be carefully allocated. They claimed they would prefer to have as many activities as possible available at the times when they are more likely to visit.
- Some parents were actively against the notion that the Family Programme should be available at all times. These were parents who wanted to be able to go to the V&A alone and enjoy the experience without the presence of noisy children

“It’s a nice Museum, don’t spoil it by trying to have kids there all of the time.” (‘User’ Mother)

7 PUBLICITY MATERIAL

7.1 Stimulus material

- Respondents were asked to comment on a recent leaflet entitled 'What's on at the V&A Sept 1999 – Jan 2000'.
- They were then given some examples of listings and advertisements for the Family Programme, which have been published in Time Out, the Guardian and the Evening Standard.

7.2 Responses to 'What's on at the V&A' Leaflet

- Respondents felt that several of the activities stood out. The most interesting were: the 'Korean stuff', the Christmas spectacular, martial arts, the Islamic events, the Diwali stories (for more than one child but particularly in the case of a boy whose best friend is Asian), the Tudor dancing (for girls who like dancing and those who have studied the Tudors) and the Saturday Jazz brunch (a Dad!).
- Respondents either found the leaflet satisfactory or less than satisfactory when asked to comment on its general appeal. Those who were not impressed said that it was dull, uninspiring, too dense and not at all family friendly

"It's not inspiring to the eye." (Non-User Mother)

- One mother said she would prefer a booklet, rather than the leaflet format for ease of use. For others, it was functionally adequate (it tells you everything you need to know).
- A few respondents complained about the clarity of the leaflet, saying that it was difficult to read because there was too much information. Others commented, or agreed, that the leaflet did not highlight that it contained information about events for children and that it was not clear how long events lasted.

- The leaflet was felt to be on a par, however, with the ones produced by the NHM and the SM.
- Children found it difficult to read the leaflet for themselves, which many of them seemed to want to do

“I get muddled with all the words.” (‘Non-User’ Girl aged 9)

- A mother from the ‘User’ group said that she used to consult a leaflet that was produced by all three South Kensington Museums stating what was happening at each, every day and was disappointed that it had been discontinued.
- Most of the respondents found that the leaflet provided an accurate reflection of the Museum, the only exception being the description of the ‘Korean fan making’.
- Several ‘Users’ expressed their surprise that they had never received the leaflet and hoped that a mailing list would be set up in the future to help them plan their visits

“If I’d been sent this (leaflet) by the V&A I would have looked at it and thought ‘well, I might go on another day as well’.” (‘User’ Mother)

- These respondents reported that most of the other venues they went to seemed to take their details in order to send them publicity material

“We would probably need to be on a mailing list for things like that...I noticed the Wallace Collection took my name and address.” (‘User’ Father)

7.3 Responses to Existing Advertising

- There was little that stood out from the past publicity as a result of the small size and density of the writing. One family had spotted the digital ‘Wish you

were here' photography exhibition but had not noticed it was only available in the summer nor that it also offered an activity for the family.

- These listings therefore had limited appeal, as most of the parents did not notice any specific details in them.
- Some parents said that they did not read the Guardian or Time Out as they perceived these to be publications for younger people without children. Some claimed to consult 'What's On in London' and 'Kids Out' or local children's listings papers that they picked up from schools or leisure centres.
- Many of the 'Passive' mothers suggested that the adverts should be placed in the publications that women like them were likely to read, such as the *Daily Mail* or women's magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* or *Woman's Own*. Others said that they would be more likely to read about the V&A in the broadsheets such as the Times and Telegraph.
- A common suggestion was that the V&A should promote itself via children's television programmes such as BBC's Blue Peter and ITV's Art Attack. One 'User' family had discovered an art cart at the Tate after their nine year old girl had seen something about it on Art Attack and then heard about the activity cart at the V&A through a recommendation while at the Tate.
- Several of the mothers felt that they would be more likely to pick up a leaflet about the V&A at their children's schools or in the supermarket than actively looking for information in a listings magazine.
- One mother felt that the radio would be the most successful medium for advertising to her as she listened in the car whilst ferrying her son about and was otherwise too busy to take in commercials or press ads.
- Although one family had found some information about the V&A and the Family Programme on the Internet, another father had searched for a site but had not found it. He assumed there was no site because he could not find any indication of the address on the leaflet. He, and some others, would therefore appreciate greater Internet accessibility.

- Our own experience of the Website was that it was difficult to access information about the Family Programme. It took us ten minutes of searching to find anything about the programme events and we did not find any mention of the Family Programme at all. It may be that the site has been changed recently since this was not the experience of the respondent who had used it as a source.

8 APPENDICES

- Recruitment Questionnaire for 'Users'
- Recruitment Questionnaire for Non-'Users'
- Topic Guides ('Users' and Non-'Users')
- Stimulus Material
 - suggestions for new activities
 - examples of listings advertisements